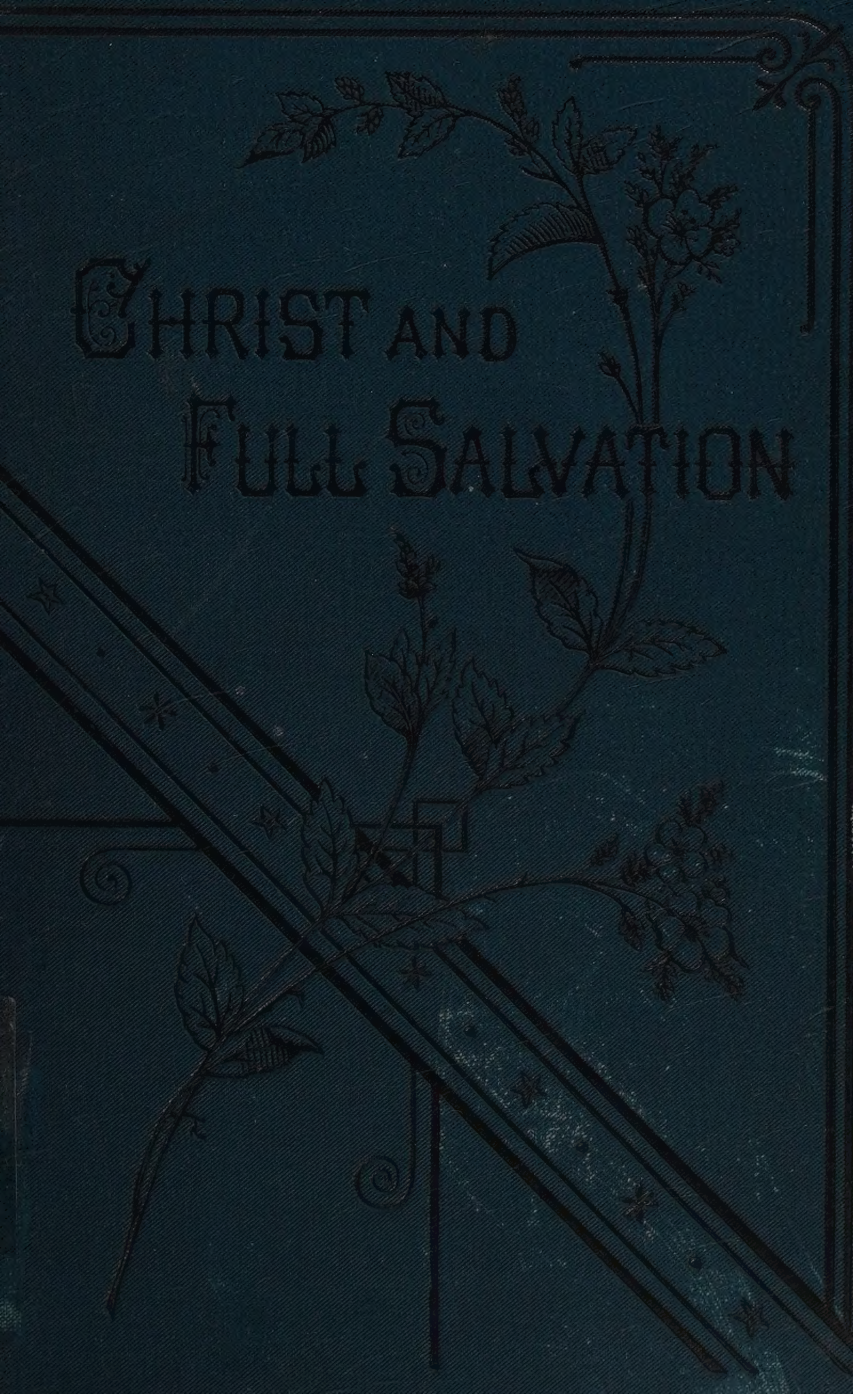
CHRIST AND FULL SALVATION



TO

MY FATHER,

IN LOVING GRATITUDE

AMONGST MANY OTHER THINGS,

FOR

LIVING LESSONS

ON

CHRIST,

OUR CROSSES, AND OUR CARES.

PREFACE.

THIS is a little book, but it is on a great subject. Would that some great mind and heart would take it up and treat it adequately! In default of that, it could be wished that when one with no pretensions to fulness of experience or philosophical power approaches the theme, time and thought could be given to look at it with completeness as far as his limited knowledge extends. But what is one to do? While time is devoted to such stray studies,

"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

So one must be content to draw from surface waters; and these chapters are, many of them, fugitive papers contributed from time to time to *The Evangelical Magazine*, *The Banner of Holiness*, and (chiefly) to *The Pathway of Power*—now known as *The Life of Faith*. These articles are now collected in the hope of effecting, by God's blessing, somewhat more lasting good. In several instances they have been enlarged, and not a few of the chapters now appear for the first time.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

WORDS OF INTRODUCTION.

Catalogue of Articles in Old Library—Pictures—Some Moderns might sit for them—New Year's Address, 1875—The Union Meeting at Oxford—Receiving Christ for Sanctification as for Justification—An Indwelling Christ will *Subdue Sins* (Illustrations)—*Scatter Cares* (even for those prone to unquietness of spirit)—*Enlarge Usefulness*—Remarks on the Brighton Convention in *Evangelical Magazine*—The Teaching was not Perfectionism—Not Stoicism—Not Indifferentism—It was a Gospel for the Saved—Testimony of a Merchant—Christ our Sanctification—Moment by Moment—Time has confirmed one's convictions of the truth of this teaching—"It does wear"—(1) Avoid "Limiting the Holy One of Israel"—(2) Avoid claiming to have "already attained, or to be already perfect"—Full Salvation Undefined, yet lines laid down in Scripture to Guide us to some idea of it—Full Salvation greater than any Description of it—Name of Christ connected with it, because *He* is made of God unto us Sanctification—Yet, not jealous for Jesus, but jealous for the Lord God of Hosts—Human Responsibility not ignored—Joseph in Prison—"He was the Doer of it."—Pp. 13-32.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S ABILITY TO BESTOW FULL SALVATION.

The first thing is to apprehend the possibility of the Blessing—Christ asks us, as He asked the Blind Man, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"—Christ had no Misgivings—nor Paul—*Catena*

of Passages on "Able"—Fact confirms Faith—Further, Christ's Ability is according to His Attributes, Power, Consolation, Counsel —What doubting the Divine Ability, what Believing it, involves—This Ability abides for all Thine and for all Toil—"You cannot, but God can."—Pp. 33-41.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S WILLINGNESS TO BESTOW FULL SALVATION.

Like the Leper you believe Jesus "able to do this," but you possibly doubt whether He is willing—God *Purposes* only what takes place, but God *Provides for* much more—His provision for Sanctification as for Justification, a comfort in spite of the fear that some Sin will live as long as Life lasts—cannot imagine Jesus saying to Leper, I will not, remain thou *unclean*—"God allows things inexplicable, allows Souls to pass away unsaved?"—But not one *such* thing, not one *Willing* Soul—Never says, I will convert thee, but not now: I will cleanse Thee, but not yet—Were the Redeemer able but unwilling, Fiends might make an Effigy of the unsaving Saviour—The Petition returned Granted, and with the "If" struck out—The Lord's Prayer, His Dying to Redeem us from all Iniquity, His being the Vine, the Shepherd, prove Christ's willingness—Otherwise Jesus must become another Jesus, and God another God.—Pp. 42-51.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YIELDING OF THE WILL ESSENTIAL TO FULL SALVATION.

Union between a Willing and Unwilling Person Miserable, and in this case impossible—"We are not Automata"—To wish to be made whole means Consecration, Separation, Singularity—On this account some do not really wish Wholeness—Others do, but do not like the Process—Do not like Leaving all to Follow Christ—But He requires it—Requires all Wrong to be Given up, all Right to be Done—"You may have it, but *are you Willing to Pay the Price?*"—Paper Making—Till there be Consecration there can be no Cleansing—The Evangelist and his Friend.—"I Will."—Pp. 52-61.

CHAPTER V.

DECISIVE ACTION NECESSARY TO FULL SALVATION.

Come to the Brink—Time for the Balloon Ascent—Doddridge recommends a Formal Surrender—Upham's Two Classes of Per-

sons—We are not to Imagine Circumstances, but to put our Present Self into God's Hands—Loss of Peace through Sin—"That's it"—Restitution—The Merchant—The Brewer—Passages in the Prayer-Book—Easy to confess *Many* Sins, Hard to forsake ONE—The Dying Miser and the Gold—The First Step was Yielding, the Second is Believing—Believing itself, *that* is Believing—Get off the Perch like the Fledgling—Air is there—God is there, and His Promises—Do not merely *dis*trust Self, Trust *Him*—Trust Him to be what?—Your All, your God—Difficulty of Explaining the Final Step in this Case, as in that of Sinners coming to the Cross—Rather realize that it is no Step at all—One is at your Side whose Grace supersedes the Troubling of the Waters—Seeing Him say, *I Venture to do this Thing.*—Pp. 62-72.

FROM PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE: CONNECTIVE WORDS.

"All Mine are Thine," that is Consecration; "And Thine are Mine," that is Faith—Both Leading to the "Land of Delight"—Propose now to show how the Principles previously laid down can be reduced to practice.—Pp. 73-74.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFLICT.

Conflict commences in Sinner—Seneca, Epictetus, etc.—Conflict continues in one Saint—Timothy, Paul, James—All conscious of more or less clashing between Duty and Inclination—Still there is this gain, that though skirmishing continues, our Waterloo has been won—"Cannot Grace reduce the skirmishing parties too?" Yes, but "Still they come"—Only Christ could say of Satan, He "Hath nothing in Me"—None else could wish the Past all Unchanged, however Pure of Purpose he may be as to the Future—Still the Christian's Fight is a "Good Fight"—Two Ways of going into Battle, and Two Ways of coming out of it—Hopeful Words of our Fathers in the Faith—Romaine, Goode, Faber of Sherborne, Thomas Scott, Andrew Fuller—Though no "Discharge in this War," yet there is Deliverance from definite Enemies—Illustrations and Instances—The Fight is a "Fight of Faith"—Not of *Hope*, nor *for* Faith merely—Two Ways of trying to meet Temptation—The one Self-Control, the other, "Looking unto Jesus"—Continuance of Conflict inconsistent with completeness of Consecration.—Pp. 75-85.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST AND OUR CROSSES.

Jonah and the Gourd—What a Cross is—Not a Sin—Nor (exactly) a Sorrow—Something that is contrary, something that is chronic, something that "Crops Up" and Disappoints—A Cross might be Defined as that which tends to make a Man cross—Natural to be "put out" but not Inevitable—The Divine Intention of Crosses is to make Character—And to melt it—The Sea and the Pebbles—The Minister and His Interruptions—The Minister and the late Train, or "All Might" equal to "All Patience"—Take up your Cross, that is, accept it—Christ willing to be your Cross-bearer as well as His own.—Pp. 86-95.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST AND OUR CARES.

The World full of Care, the Word full of Peace—"The promise of Rest sounds much but means little"—The Problem is to find a solvent for Care—A Great Step would be, the fair stating of it—It is not freedom from Sorrow, from Forethought, or from Solicitude for others—But one wishes, like Paul, to "have" Men "without carefulness"—Should be, for it is a "Commandment with Promise"—"Give Me your Church," your Children, your Bills—You wish we could change places—Each needs and each may have a Providence—God is the Basis of Peace, Trust the Secret of it—The Message of the Birds—Schoolboys, Soldiers, Mechanics, etc., God begs of each one Boon, their Burden—"All your *Need*, not all your *Notions*"—Want of Peace comes of Want of Trust, or Want of Will.—Pp. 96-105.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST AND OUR WORK; OR, TRANQUILLITY IN DAILY LIFE.

Unquietness our greatest Enemy except Sin—It Hinders Prayer—Stops Usefulness—Defeats Itself—The Problem is to find Tranquillity for Merchant, Minister, Member of Parliament, Mother, Matron, or Maid—First Thing is to Believe it *Solvable*—It is, if our Occupation be a Calling, and the Calling for us—The Secret is not so much Doing as Ceasing to Do—The Secret of Tranquillity is

Trust—Trust in the Promises—Trust in the Purposes of God—Christ's Peace because His Life a Plan—What if ours planned too?—The Holes and the Pegs—If we have blundered what to do then—The Support of Tranquillity is *Patience*—Do not be impatient with God—With Men—With Yourself—Recollectedness—The Strawberry Gatherer—Our Morning Duty—Our Midday Duty—The Young Shopwoman—The Importance of Living in the Present—"What is Father thinking about?"—"My Jesus will be alive to-morrow."—Pp. 106-118.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN WORK.

Christ's Work should be emphatically Christ's working—A Sunday School with every office (but no officer) Changed—We want the "Not I" of absolute Surrender—Our Inability extends to the Work as well as to its Results—Congregations have great Faith in Eloquence or in Ritual—The One Thing Needful is Fire from Heaven—Impulse and Guidance also needed, and also only to be found in Christ—"Thy People shall be Volunteers"—Milan Cathedral—"Every Man his work"—The Betting Man—The Hospital Patient—Christless Christian Work a contradiction in terms.—Pp. 119-131.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST AND OUR SINS.

A Psalm of Hezekiah—The Oppressions of the Enemy—Especially besetting Sin—Defeat feared as if inevitable—"Undertake for me" the Prayer of a Man at his wits' end, *i.e.*, the End of Self—Oppressed by the weight of Affairs, he cries, "Manage them for me—By the weapons of Enemies, he craves, "Meet them for me"—The Prayer of a Man who Believes he has a Friend in his God—"Ease me" (Margin) Wives and Burdens—Walkers and Knapsacks—"Become Surety for me"—The Divine Undertakings of God (our Father), of Jesus (our Judah), of the Spirit (our Sanctifier)—Testimonies—A Christian Man rid of Vanity and other besetments—A Lady on a form of Worldliness felt to be too strong for her—Make a List of besetting Sins—Confess them to God—Hand them over to God—Trust Him with them—And never take them back.—Pp. 132-142.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST AND SMALL SINS.

Small Sins, like Small Cities, often conquer us because they are Small—Think them Inevitable and you will find them Invincible; Unimportant, and you will find them most Important—Consider what Small Sins are—Do—Caused—They conquer us because "There is sin in the camp"—A different Sin—A connected Sin—A Fire to try each, but will the Christian or the Conscience go into it—Small Sins, like Small Cities, not taken, because we do not take them to God—"Carefulness about Sanctification may defeat itself"—God touches the spring, and we must yield to the touch—Dr. Johnson and Early Rising.—Pp. 143-152.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST AND OUR SICKNESSES.

The Sick Fretful—Spirit shows worse Sufferers—Especially Christ—The Sick Irritable—A good Sign?—"Selfishness the Special Temptation of Sickness"—God is here called our attendant Nurse—This ensures (1) *Society*—The Doctor cannot keep away Jesus—(2) *Work*—The Sick can do nothing for others, much for Christ—If merely to lie on the mat, see that it is well done—The greatest Work in the Universe was one not of Doing, but of Suffering—(3) *Study*—"Lie there and think"—"I know Jesus better than any Earthly Friend."—Pp. 153-161.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRIST AND OUR BEREAVEMENTS.

Mary not going to the Grave, but going to Jesus—Can any Mourner do Better?—In going to Jesus you are going to One who (1) Sympathizes with you—The Queen and Mrs. Lincoln—(2) Who Suffered for you—We drink through the orifice the nail made—(3) Who can Strengthen you—A Widow—A Mother—There is everything but "the Manifestation of the Sons of God"—(4) Who can Sanctify your Sorrows—Have you read the Engraving on the Sword-blade that Pierces you?—Christ is the Sanctifier of your Sorrows—Let Him be so—And Sorrow may be your Sanctification—(5) Who can Satisfy your Soul—The one Relic Christ left was Himself—"Am I not better unto thee than ten Sons?"—Afraid to launch out into the Deep we are dashed upon the Shingle.—Pp. 162-170.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST AND OTHER SORROWS.

A Man needs Christ as surely in a Bankruptcy as at a Burial—And may have Him too—(1) Where am I?—It is all dark—God is not dark—Nor Heaven—Nor the White Stone—Missionaries in the South Seas—Jeremy Taylor—One's "own little Handful of Thorns"—Dwell not on what is Lost, but on what is Left—(2) Who put me here?—He who put Christ on the Cross, my Sin on Christ—The God of *all* Comfort—(3) What has God put me here for?—The Trial of my Faith—The Purifying of my Life—The Inflaming of my Love—The glorifying of Christ—We need *Confidence*—That He will bring forth judgment unto Victory—*Consecration*—*i.e.*, in this case, Submission—"Blessed are the Hearts that Bend, for they shall never Break."—Pp. 171-179.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRIST AND OUR JOYS.

Jesus wishes us joy—And His joy—There is a joy which is not His, which we do not want; but if there be a Joy that is, that we do want—And there is, though He was the Man of Sorrows—He had no Happiness on Earth, but He had Joys,—He wishes us Joy in fulness, *i.e.*, Joy in flower—To have Christ's Joy we must look for it where He did, *viz.*, in God, God's Will and God's Work—Jesus and our (1) Physical Joys—Man would not have Thought to speak of eating our Meat with Gladness; God has—(2) Social Joys—Go nowhere that *Christ does not take us*—Some take too few Pleasures—(3) Literary Joys—Hard to select, people say—Suppose we leave the selection to Christ—(4) Home Joys—Always love in God and for Him—(5) School Joys—(6) Business Joys—(7) Joys of Nature—(8) Of Grace—Danger of making a God of our Joy instead of a Joy of our God—(9) Of Sorrows—(10) Of Temptation—(11) Of Heaven—We Joy in God—As our Children rejoice in us—And God Joys in us—To make Him our Joy is the only way to rejoice evermore—Joy, a Duty—The Want of it hurts us, and Man, and God.—Pp. 180-197.

CHAPTER XVII.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

Feel like one asked to describe the Alps—They cannot be described—Nor can this "Land of Delight"—Yet some who seemed to enter

it feel disappointed—Anything but Happy, Anything but Strong—This Disenchantment leads to Depression—Spiritual Contentment may be worse than Discontentment—Are we disappointed because we have Christ instead of an Experience?—Having Christ we have all that Christ has, and is, and does, and suffered—The Poor Innkeeper and the Rich Traveller—"To be Poor is best"—Rain better than a Reservoir—I HAVE JESUS—This is not having Nothing, but possessing All Things—The Veteran Disappointed for want of Perfect Rest—The Recruit only able to hold on by "Whosoever"—Build on Holy Faith, not on Happy Feeling—Dejection no positive Proof of Divine Displeasure—Paul troubled, perplexed, cast down—Even Jesus straitened—The Tide may be Coming in, though there be Refluent Waves—The Retreating Glacier—Be thankful if there be progress *on the Whole*—And even if there be not, it is the Spiritually Poor, not the Spiritually Rich, whom the Christ of the Beatitudes loves to Bless.—Pp. 198-208.

CHAPTER I.

Words of Introduction.

"Full salvation! full salvation!
Lo! the fountain, opened wide,
Streams through every land and nation
From the Saviour's wounded side;
Full Salvation—
Streams an endless crimson tide."

IN a search through an old library, I came, the other day, upon an inventory of the furniture and the contents of a Christian house in the first century. Shall I give you a few of the items? The cup of salvation, the robe of righteousness, pure linen clean and white, the water of life, new wine in the cluster, the bread of life, the finest of the wheat, the hidden manna, the white stone, the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory, the fruit of the Spirit, acceptance, adoption, assurance of faith, assurance of hope, assurance of understanding, joy and peace in believing, everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, charity, meekness, gentleness, temperance, bowels of mercies, long-suffering, kindness, forbearance, humility, love of the brethren.—

Stop, you say, that is enough—enough for one house, enough for one heart. What, then, will you say when I tell you, not of the furniture, but of the tenant of this mansion? He is the high and lofty One! The Father had said, "I will dwell in you and walk in you," and He did; the Son had said, "We will come unto him and make our abode with him," and they came; for we have it on the best authority that Christ was in them, and the Spirit of the Father was in them too—yea, their bodies were "the temple of the Holy Ghost." May we not say of such a habitation, "This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven?"

In the same library in which I found the inventory (you begin to suspect what library it was), I saw lying about several old pictures; one especially struck me. It was that of one of those very primitive people who actually believed whatever God said to them, and reaped their reward in the comfort they experienced, the life they led, and the work they did. This man, for instance, could despise the old lumber in the cellar, so long as it was under the lock of "no condemnation," and so long as Jesus kept the key he could "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and could "glory in tribulations also;" he could claim that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" had set him "free from the law of sin and death." He gloried in infirmities, took pleasure in persecutions, and so little did he care for comfort that he could write, "I know both how to be abased and how to abound. . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." To this man to live was Christ, and to die was gain, so that the aureola superstition has set around his brow is not altogether out of place: it is only

too faint to represent the "crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him at that day."

But this crown is not for him only, "but for all them also that love Christ's appearing;" and the life that led to it is for all to live. It is evident that it was so once. Every page of the New Testament shows that such privileges were practically enjoyed in the first ages of the Church. I do not say everywhere, always, or by all. No one can think that. There were some desponding moments even in Paul's life, there were some black sheep even among Paul's converts; but the normal state of the early Christians seems to have been sweet, sunny, celestial; it had the dew of the morning, the dew of heaven upon it, the converts were a happy people, a holy people, a useful people.

But surely such an exalted piety was only for an exalted age! This is not true. John Fletcher and Mary Bosanquet, his wife, might sit for their portraits, and their pictures would look as well as any of those by the old masters; so President Edwards and his wife, and so some later saints. No, the first ages are not to have it all to themselves. This is the sort of people *we* were expected to be, it is the sort of inheritance we were born to when we were "born again." Full salvation is the "heritage of the servants of the Lord," and they shall enter upon it so soon as they realize that "their righteousness"—imparted as well as imputed—"is of Me, saith the Lord."

I do not know that I can better further introduce my subject to my readers, than by quoting words written in the freedom of pastoral address to my beloved flock several years ago. I do so the more willingly because

they have been often asked for again : amongst others, a devoted minister of Christ, now in glory, pressed me to give them a permanent form. They formed part of a New Year's letter.

"For months, I might say for years, it has been apparent to me that not a few of God's children enjoy a nearness and a sweetness of communion, a delight in God, a power with men, and a victory over sin, of which I have experienced little or nothing. At the Mildmay Conference in June 1873, I saw more of this than ever before, and not only saw, but *felt* it too. Still I had no clear or definite idea as to *how* it was to be obtained or maintained, and I hailed the announcement of the Meeting at Oxford in August 1874 chiefly in the hope of learning the secret there. You know what I thought of *that* meeting :

> "It was the Pentecost on which
> The Holy Ghost did fall."

Though unable to declare myself blest with such a total illumination as gladdened many there, I think I began to see a light which I trust, by God's grace, will never be put out. The light, the secret, was just this, that we may receive Jesus for sanctification in the same free and immediate way by which we received Him for justification. Not that He is to be imputed to us for the former as He is for the latter, for that would be only justification over again under a different name ; but that we are to believe in Him as a power within us expelling evil and impelling to good : a power which is to be the very life of our life, the very soul of our soul. We are to live in the conviction that He lives in us in the spirit, as really as He once lived in Galilee in the flesh ; and thus thinks in our thoughts, wills in our wills, and works in our actions.

The conditions of this are simple confidence and sincere consecration. We must receive all things from God freely by faith; and give all things to God in absolute abandonment, allowing ourselves in the indulgence of no known sin however dear, and in the neglect of no known duty however difficult. I am but a beginner in these things, but even the beginning is so blessed, the belief of such a *constant* Saviour and such a *complete* salvation is so inspiring, that I seem to want every one, and especially every one of my fellow-communicants, to enjoy it too. Will not you try to do so? I am convinced (and I was once of another mind, remember) that the doctrine is of God, and I am sure it is worth taking a little trouble, first to understand, and then to realize.

"I believe an indwelling Christ, thoroughly trusted, would *subdue* your *sins*, *scatter* your *cares*, and *enlarge* your *usefulness*.

"When I say 'subdue your sins,' I do not mean that the day will ever come when you will say you are sinless; for 'if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.' There is not only much unconscious sin—*i.e.*, sin in some matter not yet felt to be a sin—clinging to the best of men in this bad world, but there is such a gap between our duty and our obedience (in such matters especially as loving the Lord our God),* that his must be a strangely

* I know that it is said by some that if we love God as much as at the moment we can, there is no sin left in any lack of love that may remain. But I am not satisfied with this. I am not sure that we ever do love God as much as we can. At all events, "in many things we offend all," and "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves." Both experience and observation stencil on the walls of our life the reiterated judgment of the wisest of men, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not."

constituted mind which can ever fancy that it is free from sin. But there are faults which some of us have been apt to lament as inevitable, to think of very lightly, as so natural that they were almost necessary; and these faults, I believe, may be brought any day to Jesus, for Him to put His feet upon their necks, and there and then to slay them before us. I have heard spoken testimony on this point again and again; I have in my desk written testimony to the same effect, all pointing to the conclusion that sins—and no rose-water sins either—may be *done with*, if faith will only bring them to Christ to be *dealt with*. 'All this,' writes one of your own number, now at a distance, 'is in His hands who holds my soul in such calm trust and peace that I am a wonder to myself,'—if you knew all, you would say, 'And with good reason.' I will say no more about *sins*, though I might say much more. But I look to you to bring your besetments to Christ, *believing* that 'sin shall not have dominion over you.'

"As to *cares*, my personal experience leads me to write, if possible, more confidently still. I speak in the frankness of Christian confidence when I say that I fear that I have been like those of whom Professor Upham writes:* —'Some persons who creditably sustain their claims to the character of Christians, in many respects fail in *quietness of spirit*. They are willing to speak . . . to give . . . and to suffer for Christ, and yet they often, very often, exhibit a clouded brow, and a restless unquiet temper, under those common dispensations which characterize every day and every hour.' I do not mean that I was ill-tempered (I hope I was not often that), I mean that work worried me, trifles disconcerted me, and I had any

* "Life of Faith," p. 127.

thing but a calm and tranquil heart. But if there is any lesson I have learnt lately it is this, that *I may trust God to care for my cares and to care for me too: so* that I need not be harassed as to what to do, nor impatient as to the consequences of doing it: there is guidance promised for the one, and grace engaged for the other. So that, while *busier than ever*, and, through mercy, I trust more blest, I have enjoyed on the whole a state of tranquillity as sweet as, to me, it has been strange. I am only a little child in this yet, but I am thankful even for the dawn of a better time, and am hopeful that the light in the 'valley of blessing' will shine 'more and more unto the perfect day.' Do not rebuke me for this personal testimony, and, above all, do not reject it as if it were not for you. It *is* for you. You may say, 'It is all very well in your spiritual avocations, but it will not do in my secular employ.' I say *it* will do. A great many of a minister's engagements *are secular* in many respects, and it is just here that in former days I used to fret myself so much. Besides, I know merchants who look up to Jesus in their counting-house or upon 'Change, lifting their hearts to Him while going to keep business engagements. Yes, the life of trust is a *practical* life, and I believe you would find it as possible as it is desirable. 'My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.' For this you have only to trust:

'Trusting Jesus, that is all.'

Yet perhaps not *quite* all. To *trusting Jesus fully*, I would add *thinking of Jesus frequently:* dropping the duffel grey of the homespun earthly things, and taking

up the pure gold of the God-wrought heavenly things: lifting the heart to God many times a day, 'looking unto Jesus,' as well as living upon Him. And one other thing should be added—indeed it is pre-supposed—that we place ourselves and circumstances at God's absolute disposal, taking as much or as little prosperity as He chooses to send. And not only so, but as to the choice of action as well as the consequence of it, letting God decide instead of deciding for ourselves. In a word, we must learn all from God, leave all to God, and do all in God.

"This last duty and privilege—for it is both—the privilege and duty of listening to the Divine suggestions and acting upon them, brings me to the last blessing brought out prominently by the life of faith—the blessing of *usefulness*. In this matter I know that I have much, very much, yet to learn; I cannot *feel* yet (though I believe) that 'His service is perfect freedom.' The difficulty of witnessing for Jesus unofficially presses upon me constantly and humbles me much, but this I have found (I dare say we all have found it), that the times when I was near to Christ were times that it was very easy to speak for Him; and this I have observed (and I doubt not you have observed it too), that very weak ones —believers who had less natural ability, physical or mental, than many, may yet do a great work for God, if only they give themselves up to God, just to be moved and moulded, to be sent and swayed how and whither He would have them. We too often, sadly, sinfully say, 'Our lips are our own.' We are wrong there. We too much forget—culpably forget—that our 'bodies,' and therefore our words and works, 'are the temple of the Holy Ghost,' and there we are wrong also. If we ac-

knowledged the accountability on the one side, and took the comfort on the other, we should do much more for Jesus, and speak for Jesus much oftener; and what we did and what we said would be much more to the purpose. But for service as for victory and tranquillity, I can only say—get near to Christ, get full of Christ; and the nearness and fulness will make you speak, and will make your words tell too."

So far I wrote on New Year's Day 1875; later impressions on the subject were embodied in a paper on the Brighton Convention, to which the Editor of the *Evangelical Magazine* kindly gave a prominent place in that long-established religious monthly, in September of the same year. Of this, also, it may be well to reprint some portion here.

"It is of course simply impossible to chronicle even in outline the details of these meetings. And it is more important to attempt to describe the teaching, to listen to which crowds came together.

"It was *not perfectionism*. In answer to a question of our own on this point Theodore Monod replied: 'We ought not to expect failure, for what we expect in that direction we are sure to get; but as a matter of fact Christians do fail.' And another, 'We shall never get beyond the Lord's prayer; and there is no petition we need more than "Forgive us our trespasses."' These sentences, and similar ones to these, which we ourselves took down from the lips of the leaders of the meetings, ought to be enough to set this question at rest for ever. But if more were needed, we have it in the fact, that the Scripture teaching concerning sin which continues in believers, notably in such passages as, 'If we say we have no sin, we

deceive ourselves,' is felt by them in all its sad and startling severity as referable to the *present* state of the believer; not warped and blunted as we have heard done by those who *are* advocates of perfectionism, who refer such words to a state prior to that which Christians have attained, or may attain. The difference is so marked that it forced from us, when listening to statements of men of this school—Wesley's—the exclamation, 'We see no resemblance between your teaching and that we heard at Oxford.'

"Many will say the same of that since heard at Brighton.

"It was *not stoicism* that was taught. We have indeed heard of a young widower sending out mourning cards edged with gold, and of a lady of rank leading the singing at her husband's funeral procession. But as those who have suffered bitterly through strong drink take an extreme position in reference thereto, and are excused for so doing by other abstainers, and by non-abstainers too, so in the rebound from a state in which men sorrowed overmuch it is neither unnatural nor inexcusable that some should rush to the other extreme. And it is sweet to know that our Saviour can distil balm into a bleeding heart so copiously that its song shall be—'I have found a joy in sorrow,' albeit it be indecorous to publish it by making bright the borders of our souvenirs, but we deny that such eccentricity is the tendency of the teaching; that, as we take it, is not to make us feel the sorrows—at least the relative sorrows—of humanity less, but the joy of the Lord more.

"It was *not indifferentism* that was taught. Quietism it might be, in the sense of Toplady's familiar lines—

> "Sweet to lie passive in His hands
> And know no will but His."

And who would not hail any truth that would bring tranquillity to this troubled, feverish, anxious age, and give reality to the words of Jesus—'I will give you rest?' Quietism it may have been also in the sense of the soul keeping Sabbath, ceasing from its works as God did from His; standing still to see the salvation of God, so that its energy shall be confined to working *out what God works within;* but quietism, in the sense of indifferentism to sin, or even sorrow, personal or relative, it certainly was not. The most renowned of the quietists, Madame Guyon, in her absolute acquiescence in the Divine decrees, may have gone somewhat further than was right, but one can only wish that more went half as far as she did in the passion for saving the sinful and for comforting the sad.

"What, then, was the message from God unto us which these His servants had to bring? Shall we say of their teaching—some do—as the Tory leader said of his opponent's speech, 'There were in it some things that were true, and some things that were new; but the true things were not new things, and the new things were not true things?' This can hardly be. There is 'no small stir about this way,' and this implies a certain amount of novelty and (probably) of truth. Some friends of the movement have been a little too ready to disclaim the former. Very naturally, because it is not pleasant to bear the charge of being a propagator of novelties; and quite honestly, for the truths are not only interwoven with the Bible, but in every age have had their witnesses amongst Christians. *But they are new to many*, perhaps new to most, new certainly to us; and glorious news, they are—'good news,' a very 'Gospel,'

only a Gospel not merely for sinners, but for the saved. But how to put them into words we do not know; our heart trembles to tell what is so sweet, and our pen to write what is so simple: it is in a word, 'Victory, victory, through the Lamb.' 'Given faith's uninterrupted exercise,' as Mr. Varley put it, 'and life is a continued triumph.' It is an immense postulate this unwavering trust, an altitude of soul, which for our part we are free to confess not only has never been realised in us, but the realisation of which at all we doubt in fulness for any length of time: but that an approximation to it nearer and ever nearer may be made, and that this approximation is very glorious, we also steadfastly believe. Men *do* rest and rejoice too; *do* find help for work and power over sin in a degree which they did not months or years ago.

"One testimony to this was so clear that we must record it. It was that of a banker or merchant in London. 'Sanctification by faith,' he said, 'seemed an anomaly; but He who sitteth upon the throne said, All my treasures are set at your disposal;—and the Holy Spirit is in the heart to carry out His will. The link to unite us with Him is just simple trust. It used to be the property of our spirituality when we were lifted a little to hold its flavour for two or three days, and then lose it again; but now I trust Jesus moment by moment for prayer as soon as I wake; for guidance as to what I should eat, or what I should drink; for business as to what were once its cares; and my wife would tell you that she has a new husband; my servants that they have a new master; and my employés that the little foxes which spoiled the vines are killed.' Surely there is something both new and true here.

"As there is a difference in experience, so is there also in the mode of attaining it. The old way used to be too much a way of effort—a way of self-control. *This* is a way of faith—a way of Christ-control. As John Cennick's hymn so aptly put the matter long ago—

> "The more I strove against its power,
> I sinned and stumbled but the more;
> Till late I heard my *Saviour* say
> Come hither, soul, *I am the Way.*"

Yes, we have only, as Monod said one morning, to believe what we have been singing from our childhood. Some have sung such truths without seeing their meaning. Others have rebelled against such meaning when they did see it. *We* did so with this very verse, and used to rejoice to find that from some hymn-books the obnoxious lines were expunged. This little fact proves a difference, in the degree at least, in which we used to learn and teach that Christ was our sanctification. The thought used to be too much, that *He helped* us to sanctify ourselves; that He and we did it between us. We now are beginning to see that 'we are to take Christ for our sanctification in the same simple way in which we took Him long ago for our justification.' Not that sanctification and justification are to be confounded. The Convention teaching is the very antipodes of that. Nor that sanctification, like justification, is completed at once, and has no progress, but that each is *without our deserving, without our doing;* that in a word God justifies us, and God sanctifies us. It is all of God from beginning to end.

"'All of God,' and therefore all by faith: and this not only at the beginning, but on to the end. We are not to

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look for some store of grace, which we can shut away *in ourselves*, and go for when we want it. Christ is our storehouse, and we must go to Him, to Him again and again, to Him moment by moment. The Christian is to be, as Mr. Hopkins simply but strikingly put it, not a cistern, but a pipe—a pipe open at both ends—at one to receive from Christ, at the other to give to the Church and to the world. Human nature wants more—wants to feel its wealth, to finger its money; much better, says one, leave it in the bank, and go *there* for it as often and in as large sums as ever you like. So the life is a life of faith; the shield, a shield of faith; the victory, a victory of faith; the rest, a rest of faith; the sanctification, sanctification by faith.

"And is it not possible to see the *rationale* of this, and so to tell partly at least how it works? When temptation comes the soul flies at once to Christ; says, 'I cannot keep my temper (or what not), Lord Jesus, keep it for me.' And the mind gets so engaged with Christ, engrossed with Christ, enamoured of Christ, as hardly to see or hear the adversary at all. How much better this is than trying the power of self-control! In *that* case the eye is fixed on self, on sin; in *this* on God our Saviour. But this is not all. This is not the best. The best is that *Jesus does come at such a call.* 'He will subdue our sins.' He never fails those who trust in Him; and testimonies abound of His interpositions for 'delivering grace.'"

A double defect, it will be said, attaches to these two quotations: they are descriptive rather than didactic, and negative rather than positive. They do not tell us except by inferences, WHAT *full salvation* is, or even what the author thinks it is. I may say, in anticipation of such criticism, that to give the impressions of special teaching, suggested

at the time, seemed to me to be better than to attempt to put together any separate statement now; only I should add, that, while changes have come and clouds have come, truth has not changed, neither has God. I often have misgivings of my place in the teaching herein feebly expounded; never of its being the teaching of Scripture. And many can "set to their seal;" as one who was asked if this truth were found practically to wear: "Indeed it *does* wear," he replied.

Then as to the above description being negative rather than positive: it is advisedly so; for if I were to give a certain measure of attainment, and to label *it* "FULL SALVATION," I should have to remind my readers that it is not the same measure for every man, nor for the same man at all times; for in religion, as in science, "the goal of yesterday is the starting-point of to-day."

Far be it from me to seem to suggest finality either as excluding progress or implying perfection. On the one hand, I am afraid of "limiting the Holy One of Israel," "who is able to do exceeding abundantly;" and, on the other hand, I shrink from the presumption that thinks it has already attained, either is yet already perfect. So shall we leave "full salvation" undefined, or for our readers to define, if they will, for themselves: and may God give them "great largeness of heart!"

Yet one or two Scripture lines may be laid down along which our thoughts should run. "Full salvation" is "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."* It is the "full assurance of faith,"† and "the full assurance of hope."‡ It is to be "full of goodness,"§ like the early

* Rom. xv. 29.
† Heb. x. 22.
‡ Heb. vi. 11.
§ Rom. xv. 14.

Christians of Rome; "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord,"* like Naphtali. It is that our "peace" may "flow as a river," as Isaiah prophesied; that our "joy may be full," as Jesus prayed; and that, having received out of His fulness grace upon grace, we may be filled even to all the fulness of God.

Shall we not say that whatever description may be given of full salvation, it is greater than any description? For God "is able to do . . . above all that we can . . . think." And yet—not in spite of this, but because of it (because, whatever attainments any may make there is always an infinity above, in that mind whose thoughts are as high as the heavens above ours)—full salvation is not sinlessness. We still sin ("miss the mark"),† "and come short of the glory of God." Of every Christian we can say the Spirit "is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" but of Christ only can we say that "the Spirit was given without measure unto Him."

And this leads to a remark which seems called for by another part of the title of this brief treatise, viz., that which connects "Full Salvation" with "*Christ.*" The reader will not have gone far before he discovers that the blessing is ascribed to God and the Spirit of God, almost as often as to the Lord Jesus; and he may tax me with inconsistency accordingly. Well, I must bear this censure, for I am "not careful to answer him" in this matter; I am, on the contrary, prepared to ascribe all our salvation to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. It seemed best to connect it in the first instance with Christ, because "it pleased the Father that in *Him* should all fulness dwell;" and *He* "is made

* Deut. xxxiii. 23. † Rom. iii. 23. *Gk.*

of God unto us—sanctification;" yea, *He* "is the Head over all things to the Church."

Still I am not jealous for Jesus in this sense, and I am sure Jesus is not jealous for *Himself*. Most interesting is it to trace through the gospels His constant care to lead all through Him to the Father. And at the close He glorified the Spirit, just as afterwards the Spirit glorified *Him*. No; it is not good to be jealous for One above Another in the holy and undivided Trinity.

But it is good to be "very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts," and never to suffer man, and especially self, to occupy the place which only He can fill. Independence is our great danger. Self-endeavour might be called, rather than ambition, "the last infirmity of noble minds." It is as perilous as it is common for the creature to try to save himself. First he goes "about to establish" his "own righteousness;" and even when that has proved so gross a failure that one might think so fatal a course would never be repeated, he will be found striving to be his own sanctification; and thus "having begun in the Spirit," he seeks to be "made perfect in the flesh." Against this it is that my poor protest is raised. The only hope for us is to be nothing, that God may be everything. The only work for us is to yield to Him "who worketh in us to will" (and that covers one half of every action), "and to do" (and that contains the other half). Our language is, or ought to be, "Thou, O God, hast ordained peace for us, for Thou hast wrought all our works in us."

But it will be said: "So saying, you destroy human responsibility, and even confuse the human and the

Divine personality." Assuredly we desire to do neither,* rather would we seek to quicken the one by showing how much is given, and therefore how much will be required; and to distinguish the other by assigning to God all, but only divine, operations.

Perhaps an illustration—a Scriptural illustration—may help others, as it has helped me, to see the possibility of the co-existence of a superior with an inferior will.

In the idyl of Joseph it is said of the prison in which he was unjustly confined: † "Whatsoever they did there, *he* was the doer of it." Now mark, here was a place—a prison it happened to be—in which were various people, many minds, willing, working, developing each his special characteristic; and yet it is said that one man did the whole! "They did" many things, yet *he* was "the doer of" all! And everyone understands, and at times employs, such language. You see men laying out a plantation, ask who is doing it, and are answered, "So-and-so;" yes, he is doing it all: or a house in course of erection, and are told so-and-so is building it. And if anyone were to say he thought it was the gardener who was doing the one, or the bricklayer building the other, you

* "Union of the human will with the divine is a different thing from an extinction of the human will. A will, a proper and effective will, is essential to humanity. Man without a will ceases to be man. The perfection of man's nature does not consist in the extinction of his will, but in its union with God's will." Such are the wise words of Upham in his "Divine Union," p. 154. I am glad, while pinning my faith to no human teaching, to have the opportunity of calling the attention of those who would master this subject to this volume, and to Dr. Upham's other books, "The Hidden Life," and "The Life of Faith."

† Gen. xxxix. 22.

would fancy his mind astray. So in a family "*she* rules," you sometimes say significantly of the daughter: "*he* is the master," you say of the child in the nursery. In society, too, we talk of a man being the "ruling spirit." As the courtier, asked by a judge what terrible sorceries she employed against her sovereign, answered, "Only the influence which a strong mind must exercise over a weaker."

Surely, then, there can be no difficulty in allowing God a similar power,—*the power of influence!*

"Surely not, indeed," you say. "Now I breathe freely, if all the mysterious language means no more than—influence." I did not say "no more," I said "no less;" and possibly we may see the reasonableness of allowing that there is something more.

I pick up a leaf, a flower; or I look at a garden varied as gardens are now, and I say, "What a skilful gardener must be at work here! What startling novelties and charming varieties he produces!" *He* produce them indeed! He could have no power at all except it were given him from above; no power at all without the life within, the life from God. And if this be so in plants, must it not be so, and perhaps in a higher sense, in animals; in a higher sense still, in man, for "the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding;" and, in a sense higher than all, in the case of the new man in Christ Jesus? Speaking of all men, St. Paul says of God, "In Him we live and move and have our being;" speaking of the Christian, John says, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." In proportion as we realise this mutual indwelling it will be as true in our case as in that in Genesis, "Whatever they did there, He was the doer of it."

What a blessed thing it is when it is so? A prison is a palace when it has a Joseph in it, a paradise when it has a Jesus in it: and if a prison—then a parlour, a kitchen, a counting-house:

"Every place is hallowed ground."

And so we may have Jesus doing the work that has to be done, Jesus bearing the burdens that have to be borne. Jesus carrying the cross (for crosses will come), and Jesus carried upon it (for crucifixion will come too): so that a man may say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Yes, whatever is done, He may be "the Doer of it," and then we may be sure that all will be well done. It was well done when Joseph was the doer of it: how much better when the Doer is Jesus! Is it not so? Have you not experienced enough to see that it may be, ought to be? Have there not been times when your soul was simply a vehicle for Divine grace to occupy and to guide: when all things were of God, and you were just "possessed" by Him: and other times, again, in which, though the Saviour was much and did much, yet self would intervene and interfere? "Yes," you say with a sigh, "and so would mar all." Well then, suppose for the future, you lie by and be nothing, and just let Christ do all and be all: not but there is a sphere for your activity; that sphere is, to be "led by the Spirit," that God may be "all in all." My theme is *Christ and Full Salvation*, but the conjunction might be erased, for —and this is my fundamental thought—

FULL SALVATION, IS—CHRIST!

II.

Christ's Ability to bestow Full Salvation.

"Our Father, our Father, who dwellest in light,
We lean on Thy love and we rest on Thy might;
In weakness and weariness joy shall abound,
For strength everlasting in Thee shall be found:
Our Refuge, our Helper, in conflict and woe,
Our mighty Defender, how blessed to know
That Thine is the Power!

Our Father, Thy promise we earnestly claim—
The sanctified heart that shall hallow Thy name,
In ourselves, in our dear ones; throughout the wide world,
Be Thy name as a banner of glory unfurled;
Let it triumph o'er evil and darkness and guilt;
We know Thou canst do it, we know that Thou wilt,
For Thine is the Power!"

From "Under the Surface," by F. R. Havergal.

FIVE years have passed since the Oxford Conference, more than four since the Brighton Convention; but the scenes are still fresh and unfaded in recollection, the memories only mellow by time. And the truths are always precious; nay, like other of God's promises, more precious because they have been proved. The number who have proved them must be very large, but still there are very many who have not found "the blessing." You

want to find it—I am sure you do—that rest from ruffling, disquieting anxiety; that peace too deep to be *disturbed* (keenly as it may be *distressed*) by the bitterest calamity; that power for service, and, above all, that power over sin. You wish it, want it, long for it beyond all things, some of you. Well, the first thing you have to do is to apprehend the possibility of the thing; that it is more than a dream, that it has been realised, and may be realised by *you;* and so Jesus comes to you, who are musing yearningly over the matter, with the question, *Do you believe "that I am able to do this?"*

Well, do you? Do you simply credit (to say nothing about trusting) the statements of the Saviour's power to be a Saviour indeed, a Saviour in fulness, a Saviour from wrong and weakness and uselessness, and from perpetual defeats in the battle with evil? "I do not know," you say; "I do not know. I do not quite think I do. In my own case I hardly dare; and (to be quite honest) in the case of others, I am not quite sure that I ought. The demand is so exorbitant. The experience so contrary to everything I have felt, or even met with, that you will give me leave to doubt whether the thing is possible at all."

If I give you leave Jesus Christ will not. He says that He can do it for you. His words to the blind men* are but the summary of His words to many blind Christians. What He asked them if they believed, He evidently believed Himself; and what He implied He was able to do for *them*, is nothing to what He expressly says He is able to do for us.

What child of man, what child of God, has any business

* Matt. ix. 28.

to be careworn in a world over which the knell of care was rung eighteen hundred years ago, when Jesus said, "I will give you rest?" What Christian can fail to find some outlet for his ardour to serve God and to save souls, when he remembers that Jesus is glorified, that the Spirit has come, and that "out of" *him* (contemptible as he may be in his own eyes) "shall flow rivers of living water?" What child of sorrow can find his burden greater than he can bear, when the very "Man of Sorrows" says, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you?" What tempted one, if "trusting, simply trusting," can doubt the issue of the conflict, when told that in every temptation there is a way of escape, that "sin shall not have dominion over" him, and that, abiding in Christ, he shall not only have his prayers answered*—and so be preserved from failure—but his hopes exceeded by being enabled to bring forth much fruit? †

Christ, you see, has no misgivings about it. To Him it is clear as the day. And He leaves us with the notes of confidence reverberating as He says, "All power is committed unto Me in Heaven and Earth," and binds Himself, as it were, to use this power for us by adding, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

But, as if this were not enough, other Scriptures bear testimony to Christ's power in this matter. To take but one writer and but one word. How Paul seems to love to ring the changes on the word "able!" He "is *able* to build you up," ‡ he says to the Ephesian elders: and that goes a great way towards the ability we claim for Him. He "is *able* to make him stand," he writes the Romans, §

* John xv. 7. † *Ib.* 5. ‡ Acts xx. 32. § Rom. xiv. 4.

and that of the *weak* brother, mark you. He "is *able* to make all grace abound toward you," he tells the Corinthians; * by no means the most likely Christians to have grace abounding, were it hard to be obtained at His hands. "He is *able* even to subdue all things unto Himself," † and amongst the *all* things surely are our sins, which Micah had expressly promised that He *would* subdue. ‡ "He is *able* to keep that which I have committed unto Him," §—or which He hath committed unto me, take it as you please,—writes the great father of so many souls to his dear son in the Gospel; and to the Hebrews, plaintively, "He is *able* to succour them that are tempted," ‖ and jubilantly, "He is *able* to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." And, as if all these were too little to say—and great as they are, they *are* too little about such a God and Saviour—he leaves room for the loftiest wing to soar as high as it will in his doxology in Ephesians, in which he proclaims Him "*able* to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." ¶ With this you will compare another doxology, which covers the whole ground in debate, and opéns up boundless vistas of victory, in which another Apostle** closes his letter with the shout: "Now unto Him that is *able* to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

* 2 Cor. ix. 8.
† Phil. iii. 21.
‡ Micah vii. 19.
§ 2 Tim. i. 12.
‖ Heb. ii. 18; vii. 25.
¶ Eph. iii. 20.
** Jude 24.

If words could satisfy you, surely you would be satisfied now. It matters very little that some of them apply to the Father, and some to the Son, and some to the Holy Ghost; nay, rather, it matters a great deal, for it assures us that the whole Godhead guarantees the ability we want. Better off than the blind man, we have the great Trinity in Unity asking us: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

Is it to weaken the argument to appeal to facts? Yet facts do speak. The *experience* of the writers just cited should go for something, as well as their inspired utterance. When we remember how the Gospel had reclaimed Peter, we seem to see him carving on the grave of his instability—"*Christ* is able." When we recollect how the love of his dear Master transformed the character of John, we seem to see him writing on his bitterness and bigotry—"He *is* able." When we recall the features of the Saul we knew, and compare him with the Paul we know so much better, we must retouch the letters and make the legend stand out in full relief, "Christ is *able*." Yes, and later lives no less lovely, lives of uninspired saints as saintly as of these rightly exalted by reason of their inspiration, tell the same story—even where there was much failure in them; *all* have but *one* story to tell about the ability of Christ; *He* never failed. He never failed a trusting Christian yet. There are men and women living—you know it—who have proved Him still "mighty to save." They are not sinless, they would be the first to disclaim that, but, in so far as they abide in Christ, they find that His words so applied come true, that He is "able to do this."

To do *what?* In the case in which the words were

first used, to give sight to the blind—perhaps (as He did elsewhere) to quicken the optic nerve and give the very sense of seeing. A wonderful thing that! But Jesus was able to do it. And shall He be less able to do this from which He had His name—the saving "His people from their sins;" this for which He "was manifested" to men, the destruction (in them) "of the works of the devil?" Why, it is the very thing for which He was born, for which He died; and to fail in which would be to discredit His whole character, and to upset the whole object of His career! He fail, indeed! Never! *We* may fail, alas! we *do*, the very best of us. But Christ and failure know nothing of each other. His every miracle, nay, His whole mission, burnishes as with brightest gold His assertion, which, were we not blind as these beggars, we must see and believe—"I am able to do this."

I have not quite done with the arguments for my great Master's ability even yet. One is but embarrassed with their number and variety. Surely it will not seem unreasonable to believe that Jesus should be able to do all your soul can want, when you recollect who and what He is. Think for a moment of the sources and of the resources of His power. Its springs lie deep in His Divine nature and in His human relationships. The voice that says "I am able" is

> "The voice that rolls the stars along."

The hand that dared trace that sentence is the hand of Him "by whom all things consist," and all these channels of natural power are flushed and made to flow in your direction by the relationships which it pleased the

Father He should occupy towards man. That He should be equal to all emergencies, is only what we should expect of Him who is "the power of God;" that He should bestow great grace, only what we should look for from One who has treasures and "riches unsearchable."

Do we claim for Him power to solace your sadness? Well, and is He not "the consolation of Israel"—to guide your perplexities, is not His title that of "the Counsellor?"— to eradicate your evil propensities, is not His name "Jesus?" In a word, is He not "a brother, born for adversity?" is He not your Saviour, your God, your "all in all?" Surely these names were each a misnomer, the high-sounding titles a pretence, unless He were indeed "able to do this."

While putting Christ's inquiry to your consciences, I have been more anxious to present Christ Himself to your confidence; and so to select His *answer* from His question, and to surround, as with a circlet of gold, the three little words—three great words rather—which contain it, the words "I AM ABLE," that they may shine upon the faint-hearted always. But now, having tried to do this, I may, I must, ere I lay down my pen, put it solemnly to any (and there have been many) who have been doubting the very *ability* of Jesus to be their sanctification, Are you prepared to look Jesus in the face, and, when He speaks to you of full salvation, to say "No" to His inquiry concerning your belief in His ability "to do this?"

Surely no such doubt can linger? Surely any bird, however much afraid to fly to its nest in the Saviour's bosom, must at least leave *that* perch and betake itself to another! For if you do not believe thus much, then it comes to this, that you do not believe that God is omni-

potent, that redemption is complete, that Christ is really the great Physician He professed, or the Holy Ghost the great Comforter He was sent to be.

"No," you say, "I do not mean that." Of course you do not. But that is what doubting Christ's power to be able to be all He "is made of God unto us," when fairly faced, really comes to. Look at it then, and leave it off. Own the power of Christ, of God, of grace. Own that the Gospel is not the failure it would be if the view you have been holding were true. For this and much more follows if you do *not* believe that Jesus is "able to do this."

But a good deal, and a good deal that is important, should follow if you *do* believe it also; viz., that you are going to ask Him to do it, to expect that He will do it, to look for its being done.

This is the other issue. Are you prepared for it? I hope you are; for else, yours is an inoperative faith; the mere dead man's semblance of faith. "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

"But we are persuaded better things of you, brethren, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak;" we are persuaded that some, looking upon that eye of pity, or feeling rather the touch of that hand of power, as mighty as it is gentle, will not only believe in Christ's power in the abstract, but trust His ability towards them, and find—what the blind men found—that "according to"* their "faith" it shall be "unto them."

And this ability of God projects itself very blessedly into the far future. It *prevents* "us in all our doings." It abounds towards us, if in one thing more than another, in

* Matt. ix. 29.

all toil for the Master. Many a time a weary worker throws himself back in his chair in dismay, in despondency, almost in despair at the sight of flowers broken off and fruit nipped by the frost. They have never reached maturity, and they never will. He says, bitterly, "One can do nothing in such an unpromising field." The answer is, "*You* cannot, but *God* can." Another sinks down in deeper depression from the sense of his unworthiness and unfitness to attempt anything or accomplish anything. Again the answer is ready, "*You* cannot, but *God* can." Jesus would not be Jesus, and God would not be God, if He could not; but He *can*. Yes. A thousand empty pitchers, empty and broken to boot, testify to His "strength made perfect in weakness." Thus by every duty that devolves upon us we may set down abounding ability to perform it, for it is "the ability which God giveth."

III.

Christ's Willingness to bestow Full Salvation.

"What an untold might would be ours in striving against sin, if we did indeed believe it to be God's will that we should overcome in the struggle! If you would be strong, seek the strength which you must not dare to doubt will be given to him that asks in faith. Seek it in the hours of pressing temptation. Cast yourself down before God through Christ; then when the earthly, the ambitious, the untrue, the unloving desire is strong within you, then say to Him: 'Lord, it is *Thy* will that I should be holy; it is *Thy* will that I should trample upon this temptation;' and you shall have sure proof by the putting forth of a new might in your hour of trial, that this *is* God's gracious purpose for you."—*Bishop Wilberforce.*

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean . . . I will; be thou clean."—MATT. viii. 2, 3.

THE story of the blind men spoke to us of Christ's *ability;* the story of the leper speaks to us of Christ's *willingness.* You remember that story. You remember how the sweet and precious sermon—the Sermon on the Mount—is followed by a "solemn procession of miracles." You recollect that the leader in this procession is the leper. Hanging somewhere on the outskirts of the crowd, he had heard the words of Jesus, and had been won by them to believe in His power to cure his else in-

curable plague. Long as he had suffered, loathsome as he felt the very sight of him must be—for he was "*full* of leprosy"—he had come to confide in Jesus to such a degree that he felt no hesitation in thrusting himself upon His notice and supplicating His grace. No hesitation, and no faltering either. "It must, indeed," says Farrar, "have required a stupendous faith to believe that the young Prophet of Nazareth could heal a disease of which the worst misery was the belief that, when once thoroughly seated in the blood, it was ineradicable and progressive;"—almost as prodigious as the belief that the same Being is mighty enough to cope with the deeper disease of which leprosy was but the shadow. But this faith the man had: this faith the Master deserved: this faith the event justified. And so will it be, Christian, with yours.

The effect of recent teachings on holiness must surely be to produce on your mind just the impression that this single service and sermon produced on this man's—that there is cleansing to be had, that there is One, though only One, who is able to "make," even your foul heart "clean." "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst." The man had reached that conclusion, and so have you, if you have gone with us so far. Jesus is "*able* to do this:" "even our enemies being judges."

But that is not enough. That conviction does not suffice for us, nor can that half-confidence satisfy Christ. And so Jesus, having asked "Believe ye that I am *able* to do this?" goes on in effect to ask, Believe ye that I am *willing* also? And here, I am sorry to say, Christians and Christians—nay, Christians and Christ—part company. Some that answer the first question satisfactorily, halt at

the second. Some that with the blind men say, "Yea, Lord," to the question of the Divine ability, can get no further than this leper, if so far, as to the question of Divine disposition.

To speak plainly,—many do not believe that Christ wishes to make them clean. They think (though they would hardly dare to say so) that a certain amount of sinning must go on to make them sensible of their own vileness, and so that Jesus tolerates the lesser evil to avoid the greater.

To deal with this matter we must carefully "distinguish things that differ." Things may touch, and cross, and lie in the same plain, and yet be absolutely distinct. For instance, in this case there are three things, the Divine desire, the Divine decree, and the human result. The two latter (though distinct) are coincident; the two former may be divergent.

Facts will always represent the purposes of God. But they may not always represent His provision and volition. Butler's familiar illustration of the waste of seeds will occur to many. Thousands of seeds are created with an evident fitness to root and germinate, to grow into trees and bear fruit after their kind, which perhaps never grow at all. One man, picking up the waste germs and putting them under a microscope, might say, "You see God evidently *purposed* these seeds to grow." Another, thinking only of the result, and believing that whatever happens, happens according to the Divine will, might reply, "God never could have *purposed* that, or they would have grown." "He did not purpose it," a third might strike in, "but He *provided for it.*" And so we must distinguish between what God *wills* and what God *wishes*—between what He

provides for and what He also *purposes:* for on the one side we have the Divine *decree*, on the other the Divine *desire*. God *desires* the salvation of all, but He does not *decree* it, or it would take place; He provides for it, but can hardly be said to *purpose* it.

But it is a great thing—how many unsaved ones have felt it, and how many saved ones in dealing with the unsaved?—a great thing that the Divine desire and the provision are on the sinner's side, whatever the hidden result may be.

Christ has tasted death for every man, and God would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn from his way and live. A great thing, I say, it is to have these two factors in the calculation fixed and known, and known to be favourable; having them we may—as in any case, we must—willingly leave the third.

And these same factors are on our side in the matter of sanctification. Christ is sufficient—yea, all-sufficient. That is much. And He is desirous—yea, most desirous, and that is more. Whether besides this ample provision and earnest desire, there is also the purpose and decree in any case or cases that it shall be so, who can presume to inquire? That will be determined by the event. That is a secret thing belonging to the Lord. I may think (and I do) that sin will abide in my soul so long as my soul abides in my body; and if so, in that sense God has of course purposed that it shall. But this I cannot know. I *can* know, however, what is such a comfort to be known, viz., these two things—that there is everything in Jesus both to enable and to incline Him to give me the victory; that His power is on my side, and that His wish is on my side also; that as my sanctification lies

within the scope of His ability, so does it also within the circle of His desire.

For, suppose the contrary. Allow for a moment the monstrous supposition that Jesus could say to a leprous soul who comes with his—"If Thou wilt Thou canst"—imagine, I say (though I can hardly bring my hand to write the words), that Jesus could reply, "I will not: remain thou unclean" (and that is what the counter theory comes to): how one's whole conception of His character would be changed. What! I want to get rid of sin and Jesus not willing to bring it to pass: Jesus, the gracious, the gentle, whose whole nature disposed Him to yield to supplicants; Jesus the Priest, the Sacrifice, whose whole work was meant to exterminate evil! Not willing to do this thing: then can God be love, and desire the well-being of His creatures; Christ a Saviour, and live for their redemption; the Spirit a Spirit of Holiness, and live for its promotion! He is no Comforter who refuses this comfort, no Saviour who declines *this* salvation, no Father who foregoes in *this* a parent's desire for his children's weal.

But stop! say some: Do you forget how many things God allows which yet we cannot explain, and how many souls pass away unsaved in spite of His great salvation? Quite true, there are many things God could perhaps do and does not, but *not one* SUCH thing. There are many souls God could possibly save, and does not, but *not one* WILLING soul. There are mysteries upon mysteries in the universe doubtless: but not one of all of them implies the hindrance of good by the Source of all good, or the limitation of salvation by its Author and Creator. If all sinners were willing to be saved, God would rejoice to save all.

And assuredly if one saint—or if all—is wishing to be sanctified, God will not be the Being to hinder the work of sanctification, or Christ unwilling to make the moral leper clean!

Besides, on what ground are we asked to concur in this stern, this offensive theology? On the alleged ground of the greater glory to God that will result from progressive sanctification.

Now let it be freely admitted that sanctification *is* progressive; or, if it is not, it ought to be. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Every Christian should grow in grace; but there is no reason why his growth should not be rapid, and no reason why at any instant he should not find Christ ready to release him from any sin. I have heard of a sinner—a saint of God now, for it was Augustine—who breathed the guilty prayer, "God convert me, but not now;"—but I never heard that that sinner's prayer was answered by a voice from heaven saying—I will, I will convert thee, but not now; or, a similar petition of any saint's by a similar assurance:—Thou shalt have my cleansing, but—not yet. The thing is an odious and intolerable reflection on the character of my God and Saviour.

Is it more to the credit of a contractor that he postpones work and puts it off from time to time? Yet we are to believe that the longer sanctification is delayed, and in fact the less of it that is done in this life, and the more that is pushed off into the next, the more God is glorified. A strange method of promoting the divine glory surely!

But suppose we carry the appeal from the chambers of

the official pleader—who, having a brief to hold for a certain school, must maintain his ground at all costs—to the court of conscience and experience. Is it indeed the case then that we will, and that God will not?—that we wish to be sanctified and that He refuses to sanctify us? The thing is only conceivable in the gross, and cannot be even imagined in detail. Take a particular individual and a particular sin. Better still, let the individual be yourself, and the sin your own.

Have you ever seriously set yourself to seek the Lord, and when you have found Him said to Him: "Save me from sin—from this sin," and found Him answer you: "No, I do not wish to do so—at least as yet?" A *thorn* in the flesh God may deal thus with. A *temptation* in the flesh He may even continue to permit. *But a sin* in the flesh—never. Let me see the man, especially the man who loves the Lord, that can look Jesus in the face, that face all lined with love, and say to Him—Lord Jesus, Thou art *able* to cleanse me, I know, but I do *not* believe Thou art *willing*. Let me see the Christian who can take the hand of the Christ—that scarred hand—and say, I know He could heal me if He would, but I know He will not. The man—the Christian—has yet to be created who could do this thing; and God I am sure will never create him. The idea is only tolerable, you see, by being enveloped in a cloud of verbiage. It will never stand the light of day, or the tests of facts or experience. Were a full life-size figure drawn of this Redeemer able but not willing to cleanse, many a mocking spirit from below would grave beneath the title—The unsaving Saviour;—and many a disappointed disciple might ask, "Is this my Master, the God whom I trusted, the King whom I tried to serve;

this the Being I thought the very synonym of pity, purity, and power? It can never be. They have taken away my Lord out of the sepulchre. This cold cruel marble is not my Christ. He may be the Christ of others, He certainly is not mine. My Jesus is love, and I had almost rather believe that He lacked the power to bless, having the will, than the will, having the power. '*My* Jesus hath done all things well,' and He is *both able and willing* to make me clean. I am sure of it; my conscience tells me so, my heart tells me so. Take away that idol; give me back my God!"

But there is yet a higher court of appeal—the court of Scripture. Let us carry the case there. Does it represent God in Christ as a reluctant God, having power to sanctify, but not willing to use His power? Did Christ give occasion in the instance of the leper for such a representation of His procedure? Did He say now, His power admitted, and His pity asked—I can, but will not? The very opposite. He gave back the petition granted; but with an alteration in it: the "*if*" was struck out. Silver-arrow though it was, that word went to His heart; not indeed in this case to wound, but to open wider the channel for His cleansing and His charity to flow. "If I will, is it? Nay—*I will without any 'if.*' Is it not for this very thing that I am come?" Surely after what Christ said in this case it would be doing a double wrong to restore that "if," adding to it a sting it never had in this poor man's lips, viz., the sense of reluctance. The leper erred in saying, "If Thou wilt," though meaning, probably, "I believe thou art willing." How much more we, if we mean—"but I do not believe that Thou art." Yet this is the prayer for purity which on the other

hypothesis we must pray. Such hypothesis is a mere figment, with no foundation in reason, conscience, or Scripture.

Certainly not in the latter. God never said "to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye My face in vain:" never turned away the prayer of the poor destitute, or despised their prayer; and one prayer which of all others they oftenest put up—and that directed by divine warrant—is "Deliver us from evil;" a useless prayer, a mockery of both God and man; in a word, an impossible prayer for Christ to teach, if there were not "delivering grace" to be had; if deliverance from the evil one were not within the will, as it is within the power of God now. Then is not Jesus said to have "saved us and called us with a holy calling;" and to delight to show His saving power in turning away* every one of us from his iniquities? "He gave Himself for us;" †—what stronger proof of willingness could there be than that!—"that He might redeem us from all iniquity." The prophecies teem with declarations of His willingness to do this thing—nay, "willingness" is too weak a word for a desire so intense that it "will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax."

I thought, too, that Jesus was to me the true vine; and can He grudge me the grace that would make the grape swell and the new wine of the kingdom come in the cluster? I used to say of Him and of the Father in Him—"The Lord is my Shepherd," but what sort of Shepherd is He who would let me "want;" let me be faint and famished and foul too, and refuse to "make me clean," though I bleat my wish for cleansing, and though He owns to having the power? Not the Good Shepherd.

* Acts iii. 26. † Titus ii. 13, 14.

certainly, not the Shepherd who came to lay down His own life that I might have life more abundantly.

No, I will take my theology from my Bible, I will take it from my Master Himself.

He says He is willing, He shows He is willing, His every word proclaims His willingness, His every deed echoes it. I must have got the wrong Bible if it is not so. His willingness to "cleanse and defend" His "Church" is uttered by every parable, "writ large" on the front of every blessing.

Jesus assuredly must wear another form. He must take another nature; He must certainly get another heart—He must in every way "deny Himself"—a thing you know "He cannot" do: He must cease to be Jesus, if He be not willing—as willing as able—to do this thing. It is one of the things—I had almost said, *the one thing*—about *which the divine willingness* is *asserted;* for as the Holy Ghost saith, "THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION."

Think of this and doubt the Divine desire no more.

IV.

The Yielding of the Will essential to Full Salvation.

"Lord Jesus, dost Thou call me,
To give my heart to Thee,
And dost Thou really offer
Thine heart and love to me!

My body, soul, and spirit
To Thee I freely give;
In happy restful union
With Thee henceforth to live.

From Thee I draw my life, Lord,
A vine-branch in the Vine;
Thy grace flows freely through me,
The fruit I bear is Thine."

THE ability of Christ to grant us full salvation has been sufficiently shown, and so has His willingness: what then remains to be done—what hinders that any of us is not sanctified wholly? This hinders—*your will is wanting.* His people must be willing in the day of His power, and without their mind will He—can He—do nothing. It is not enough that *God* wishes this, *you* must wish it too. Were there at the altar of marriage a willing and an unwilling person, miserable must that marriage be. But

in *this* case the union is not merely miserable, not merely forbidden; it is impossible. God and man can never be fully one till our *will* is His.

Those who advocate the rest of faith are accused sometimes of denying human responsibility. The accusation arises from the poverty of human language and the downward tendency of human thought. We have to employ physical illustrations of spiritual things,—to speak of our position in the hand of God as that of a pen in the hand of a writer, or an arrow in the hand of an archer. But does anyone in his senses suppose that it is meant that the likeness extends to every particular? What illustration does? We indignantly repel the accusation of denying, or of lessening in the least, the responsibility of man: not only because it has been repeatedly said—as said Mr. Haig Miller at Brighton—"we are not automata;" but because no class of Christians have so persistently, so perpetually, urged the necessity of consecration. And what is this but to assert our liberty and responsibility in the strongest terms? We continually contend that we have a will; but as continually do we recommend that it should be given up to God.

Jesus having said that first mighty word, "I AM ABLE," and having asked, *Believest thou?* adds as solemnly, "I WILL," *i.e.*, I am willing: and the whole hindrance to sanctification with many of us lies in our answer to the question with which He follows it up. He is putting it pointedly to some at this very moment: "*Wilt thou?*—wilt thou be made whole?"

"Why, of course I will,"—it is our first impulse to reply. "Who would not? Who would not wish to be

well, I should like to know, especially wish to be well in soul? Not I, I am sure; it has been my wish for long enough, my intense and intensifying desire during the last few eventful months." Are you so sure of that? It will not do to answer so profound a question from so august a Questioner in a hurry. Perhaps, on second thoughts, you may find that you are *not so wishful* to be wholly sanctified as you think—possibly not even *willing*.

For it means a good deal to wish to "be made whole;" and some there are who certainly do not wish this. It means, Lord Jesus, to be made "entirely Thine;" and some of us there are—dreadful as it is to think so—who prefer "some of self and some of Thee." It means, to be wholly consecrated; and some there are who prefer to keep back part of the price. It means, to be "not conformed to this world;" and some there are who do like "just a little spice of worldliness, they must confess." It means, to have one's conversation—citizenship—in heaven; and some there are who prefer to be citizens of earth, or rather—for we speak of real children of God—citizens of heaven and of earth together. It means, that we are to be—as one once said—pointed at as a peculiar people—*a peculiar people even among Christians;* and not a few there are who frankly say, "Thank you, I'd rather not." Or, if they do not say it, their whole bearing says it for them. Come, tell me; is it not so—that considering the whole matter, looking at it on the right hand and on the left, you conclude that it is better not to be over-scrupulous—safer not to push things to extremes; and so, though you may lose some joy, and forfeit great peace, and give up some special crowns, when Christ comes to distribute His rewards, yet, on the whole, that

you will not be a candidate for these higher honours: for you will not join the rigid, uncompromising class of Christians? Now, what is this but to say that you do not wish to be made *whole?*

You will doubtless reply, But I do not consider that type of Christianity *wholeness;* I regard it as being "righteous overmuch;" I think the more moderate, less enthusiastic Christian, the higher Christian. Let me entreat you not to add to your other sins the sin of equivocation. Some there are who, no doubt, honestly, hold the lower to be the higher; and with such, upon this head, we have no further question. But is it really so with you? In your heart of hearts, do you not admire and approve that very style of piety you refuse to adopt? It is to be feared that amongst Protestants a great deal of the old Romish way of thinking obtains, and that many things are regarded as "counsels of perfection" which ought to be esteemed commandments of God for all Christians. Instead of its being your honest conviction that the life of complete consecration is a lower life, I put it to you whether you have not really regarded it as higher—only as needlessly high—too high for *you*, at all events; so that you must be satisfied with something lower, and that God may wink at this your choice of a confessedly lower thing?

If this is so, is it any wonder that you have to complain that you are a stranger to the full enjoyments assured to those who are fully their Lord's? You have been wanting to keep a little bit of the world—a little bit of self-seeking —a few of the feelings of other men about forbidden things; you have been turning back in your hearts unto Egypt; is it any wonder that God should let you wander

in the wilderness?—hankering after flesh instead of being thankful for angels' food, is it any wonder that God sometimes should suffer you to hunger? He offers you all, and you say, I would rather have only half: would it be surprising if He took both halves away? At all events you cannot have the whole while you only wish for half; you cannot have the fruit springing from a second and sweeter half while you only sow the contents of the first and poorer. You must be willing to be made whole, or you can never have the blessed results of health. And some, I say, are evidently *un*willing. They wish to be happy, but not to be healthy—to be partly well, not to be "every whit whole."

So far for those who do not like the blessing itself: a second class there is who would like that well enough, but do not like the process by which alone it is attainable. Some would rather make *themselves* whole. They have such an estimate of sacraments or services that they prefer this way to God's way—the way of works to the way of faith. Others stand so strong in their estimate of their own virtue that they prefer to try what force of character can do—works, rather than faith, again. But not many of my readers run this risk. To them, next to hearing that it was possible to be made whole at all, it was sweet to learn that that making whole was to be entirely the work of another. Oh! blessed and beautiful tidings, there is soul-health for me, and it is the free gift, the gracious operation, of Another. Be it so. You rejoice in the Great Physician, but are you willing to undergo His *regimen?* You are sitting down to build a tower whose top shall really reach to heaven, but have you counted the cost? What cost? you say. "What will it

cost me to be wholly Christ's?" Perhaps little, perhaps much, certainly something. The little—and it may be, nay, it *is*, much less than you think—will, I suspect, cost you a good deal to part with; like the lady's favourite ring, the only jewel her over-scrupulosity perhaps allowed her to retain, which, when relinquished and taken to the lapidary, turned out to be worth one-and-sixpence! Yes. It may be a very trifle in itself—a paltry bit of pleasure, or a paltry bit of pride—anything, the smallest, will do for an idol, but having made an idol of it, it is no small matter to give it up and to consent to shatter it to pieces. Thermopylæ may be a very narrow pass, but it is just such a pass that your handful of an army may choose to contest with the forces of the King of kings.

But it is not always so; sometimes the matter in debate is the dearest thing in the world—that which is dearer than life, and only less dearer than Jesus. Who has not known some Christian compelled to choose between a worldly match and a Heavenly Master? I do not know whether to approve the course said to have been taken in such a case when prayer was asked for the conversion of the sinner. None could pray the prayer, but one prayed for the saint, that her faith might fail not, and she was strengthened to renounce a bond which would have been, at best, but sweet slavery.

But whether it be much or little that God disputes with you it must be surrendered. "Leave all, rise up and follow Me," was His word to disciple after disciple in the days of His flesh, and is His word to soul after soul still. And mark, as there was a first call, and a second, and perhaps a third in those days, so there may be in these. Consecration may be, and too often is, unthought of in

the crisis of the soul when you first come to Christ; all the more must it be made when Jesus comes a second time saying, "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee cut it off." It will not do to say, "This is Thy task, this is the very thing Thou offerest to do for me." In one sense it is, but in another very intelligible sense it is not. If there are certain known evils lurking within, practices of sin or individual acts of sin; these must be put away, or it is mere mockery to ask Christ for wholeness. And though the putting away must be done by us in *His* strength, yet by us it must be done. Christ will not do our work. "Let us cleanse *ourselves* from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit."

We must be found *giving up everything* God shows us to be *wrong;* like the Christian man who took daily opium enough to kill thirty men. A friend asked by him, "What shall I do?" said "Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ;" he said, "I have done it a hundred times." After talking till 2 A.M. the friend said, "You have to give it up if it kills you, and to trust Christ who has the power to take away the appetite." "Well," he said, "it *will* kill me"—but at last he said, "I give it up." It did not kill him, and to this day he has been as free as if he had never had the taste.

We must be found also *doing everything* that God shows us to be *right*—our prayer being no less than the Apostle's "What wilt Thou have me to do?" than the Psalmist's "See if there be any wicked way in me." The lamented teacher so lately taken to his rest tells of a wife who lost all peace, because she refused to go, as God and conscience dictated, to deal faithfully with an unsaved husband about his soul. The chapter on "being filled with the

Spirit," in his book* on "Revivals," deserves careful perusal by those "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of" this "truth." It shows us how many things we must expect to suffer if we will be "made whole." Ridicule from without; distress in view of the state of the world, the Church, even the ministry within; opposition from self, from devils, from men, even from godly men not wholly consecrated: but, he adds, "you will have peace with God." Does not the gain outweigh the loss? In any case the loss must be hazarded; if we are to win Christ, if we are to live Christ, we must count all things but loss for Christ. "You may have it," said an aged saintly servant of Christ, speaking of this very thing, "*you may have it, but* ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?"

Suppose the papermaker were to address a heap of rags—dirty, tawdry, torn—and to say, "You may be made into white and beautiful paper—pure, untarnished, and untorn;" and, if the rags could speak, some were to reply, "Shall we give up our gay tints and our cunning patterns to be made into your colourless, monotonous fabric?" Would you not say, "Foolish rags, keep your finery then, but you must keep your filth too?" Or if others answered, "We do not care about keeping our colour, we are content, and thankful, to lose it, that we may get thoroughly cleansed, but we do not like the washing and the rinsing and the rasping, the crushing and the coming under the great rollers and the wicked worrying wheels." Would you not say again, "Foolish fragments, you would fain be white, would fain be beautiful, but this you cannot be while you refuse to undergo

* Professor Finney's.

the process which alone can make you so?" Christians, learn the lesson and know this, that *till there be consecration there can be no cleansing.* First the broken and the contrite heart—a heart so contrite that out of its crevices, now "broken," all its hoarded morsels, all its hidden dainties, flow; then the clean heart, the "heart from sin set free."

A friend from Northampton told me an incident of God's work there. An attendant at a special service, unable to sleep one morning, rose at four for a walk. God, who prepared His Cornelius, prepared His Peter also. He roused the evangelist at the same hour, and sent *him* to the same spot. They went, and got into conversation. "Now," said the evangelist at last, "will you accept Christ?" The man hesitated. "On your wedding-day," urged the other, "you had to say, 'I will,' and till you said it you could get no further. Now you must say 'I will' to Christ, or you can get no further: come, if you will have Christ, say—I will." "I—" said the man. "I *will*," said the evangelist. "I WILL," said the man, and burst into tears. "You are married to Christ now," said the other, and he went home rejoicing.

How one wishes every child of *man* would do the same, but surely the least that we may expect is that every child of *God* will. In His sight, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, I call upon you, then, to search and see what the hindrance, what the idol is; and I beseech you to say to Him, "*I will, I will give it up:*" or what the duty that you have left undone, and to say, "*I will; I will rise and do it.*"

In veiw of all this, consider again your answer to Christ's question—"Wilt thou be made whole?" There

is, I hope, no doubt as to the answer—but more intelligence about it. You are as ready as ever to say, "With all my heart, I will;"—you will say it, I trust, with a depth of meaning which every consideration of its difficulty has only made deeper. If I understand you, the language of your heart is—in view of all the cost, and in spite of it, with clear apprehension of all the consequences, and appreciation of all that it involves—

> "Lord Jesus, I want to be perfectly whole,
> I want Thee for ever to live in my soul.
>
> I give up myself, and whatever I know;
> Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*

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* Much as we delight in this sweet hymn, we doubt the application to sanctification of words (Psalm li. 7) designed by God, perhaps, to apply to justification.

V.

Decisive Action necessary to Full Salvation.

"Yes, I am happy now;
How easy was it all!
Just to cease struggling, and allow
My soul on Thee to fall;
Just to be poor and weak
And all I really am,
Yet to have more than heart can seek
In God's own perfect Lamb."

WADE ROBINSON.

WE may say of some, almost as did Paul of the Corinthians, ye were "forward a year ago;" but alas! of many, though by no means of all, we have to add—like Paul to the Corinthians also—"now, therefore, perform the doing of it." For seeing is one thing and doing is another; even saying is one thing and doing is another. Very many clearly apprehend what ought to be done, and appreciate the results that would follow upon the exercise of will; but, somehow, events palsy their hands, and so—

"Their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action."

It is with the new Jordan as with the old—with the Rubicon of decision as with the river of death—that

> "Timorous mortals start and shrink
> To cross the narrow sea!"

or, as Theodore Monod puts it, like persons who hearing of a balloon ascent, go to the aeronaut to secure places; they are most eager to ascend, and not a little disappointed when told that it is doubtful whether there will be room for them; but when the time comes, and the balloon is ready to start, they are not to be found; their courage having failed when the hour of departure arrived. Surely it is high time that this sort of thing came to an end: that thinking and talking were exchanged for doing and acting.

"But what is it precisely—be very precise please—that you want us to do?" Two things:

I. We want you to make a *full surrender*—a complete sacrifice of yourself to God. You have done it a hundred times, or have said that you have done it: yet even if it has been more than "saying" in the past there is an advantage, as the eminently pious Doddridge used to reiterate, in making such consecration at certain times with special solemnity; but, over and above this, for many surely there may be the duty of doing for the first time what they never have done—never at least with their whole hearts. As to this, however, there are differences resulting from idiosyncrasy and circumstance.

Professor Upham points out this with his usual discrimination. "In some, though not in many, the natural man, in the comparative sense of the term, dies easily. They have an intuitive perception of what God requires, and yield readily and willingly. Others—the great majority—are not brought to this state without passing through exceeding afflictions, both external and internal.

This happens partly through ignorance, and partly and more generally through self-will."

Some, especially those of the first disposition described in this extract, may ask: "But what am I to surrender? I am not conscious of any habit of sin indulged, not conscious of any duty habitually neglected; am I to give up what God may have never asked, to imagine myself in circumstances of sorrow which may never come, and then to say that I can acquiesce in them and delight to do the will of God?"

By no means; that would be to indulge in morbid musings, which are always wrong; it would be also to draw on the grace of to-morrow, which will be given only when to-morrow comes. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It will be quite enough for you to bear it then. But what you have to do is to put your *present* self absolutely into God's hands, giving up the control of all your actions, and leaving to Him the disposal of all your circumstances. Henceforth your time, talents, money, are to be held for Him, used for Him entirely; you are to lay no selfish hands on any of them. If spent *on* yourself, they are not to be spent *for* yourself, but for God. You must have no reserves, not only no sin, nothing of any kind, neither of possessions nor of persons. Your goods are to be all "Corban," your children are to be all "Samuels," "lent"—the Hebrew has "*given*—unto the Lord." You need not conjure up imaginary tests of the sincerity of this self-renunciation; the real ones will be quite enough, will be much better. A thousand things will give us

> "Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To bring us daily nearer God."

Another thing must be said, too, and said with emphasis. Do not infer too hastily that you have nothing, even no sin, unsurrendered. Heart-sins are often hidden sins. The proverb about the snake in the grass applies not only to outward but to inward enemies. "The heart is deceitful" as well as depraved, and may mislead you. Mine has misled me.

I remember, after a period of very sweet communion, losing the peace and power it had brought. Lamenting this to an experienced Christian, the question was asked, Was there not a cause; was there not a sin? "No," I said; "no special act that I remember." But, upon quiet reflection, I could not but recall one, and more than one fault, and these repeated, to which doubtless the loss of communion was partly due, though building upon feeling may have aggravated the evil.

So, also, I heard one basking in the light of God tell of one who came to him and said: "How is it I cannot get 'the blessing?' I believe in it, pray for it, trust for it, and yet it is not vouchsafed me." "Depend upon it," said his instructor, "there is a cause." "I cannot tell what it is then." "You mean that you are unconscious of any sin, any unfaithfulness?" "I do." "I lifted my heart to God," said his guide, "to ask Him to guide me, and He gave me this question for him: 'Are you living on bad terms with anyone?'" "Ah!" said he, "*that's it.* THAT'S IT. I must go home and be reconciled to my brother." And he did, and was; and then the blessing came. And so it may be with you.

You see then that even the *discovery* of the hindrance may be difficult: but there is another thing more difficult still—more difficult and quite as necessary—the *forsaking*

it. Here is the critical point with most, and just here it is that so many fail. They think they forsake it often when they do not. They give up with one hand, but take back with the other; give up in the gross, but keep in detail; give up one hour, but resume the next. How many will part with the whole world upon their knees to return to it the next time its greed clutches their hand, or its gaiety flaunts itself before their eyes. Let us see the man who will part with all, like the merchant who, after the Oxford Meeting, wrote to a creditor, "I underpaid you in such a transaction;" and, not satisfied with that, finding the difference greater, wrote again and sent the balance;—or, like the brewer who, at the Brighton Conference, pricked to the heart about his brewing, gave it up, and prayed for grace to carry out his determination to cease to brew. Let there be more real practical consecration like this, we say, and it will shake the world.

There are two or three passages in the Prayer-book well worth the study of those who use it; one is that in which they daily say they confess their sins with an "*obedient* heart"—*i.e.*, I take it, a mind made up to obey; another, "*giving up* our*selves* to Thy service" (I often wonder how many give up *self*, or anything); and the third is that in which all coming to communion are invited to take it to their comfort on condition that they "*intend* to lead a new life." This is a "doctrine of intention," which is as Scriptural as it is practical, and without which all our "religion is vain." But how rare, how hard to find carried out?

It is a comparatively *easy* thing to *confess any number* of sins, a very *difficult* thing to *forsake* ONE. Anybody can say of the *greatest faults*, "I am sorry for them," but

not many humble themselves to say even of the *least*, "I mean to give them up." Yet this is the only sort of confession God can hear. Let there be a searching, then, that we may discover the windings of that long labyrinth —the human heart—and then, having tracked the destroyer of our peace to his lair, that we may utterly put it away.

An evangelist was praying with a dying woman; while he prayed, he said, he heard first one weight and then another fall to the floor. It was bag after bag of gold, which the miserable creature had kept clutching to the last, till, her heart at length touched, she dropped one and another from her grasp, thus giving up all to Christ. So, be it gold, be it glory, be it what it may, let it go, let it all go, let it go once and for ever, let it go *now*. And do not part with it as if you were having a tooth extracted, or something of that sort done, as if you were the loser: Christ, so to speak, is the loser, you are the gainer—infinitely, immeasurably so. *He* gets "a guilty, weak, and helpless worm,"—you get peace, and heaven, and Jesus. Oh! the bliss of getting Jesus! The joy, the ecstacy of having Jesus! All things in heaven, not to say your earthly things; all things that are good, not to say your evil things, are not to be compared to Him. Yet any of these kept back may be a dam to keep out the waters of His matchless love. Break it down. Cast it away. Say with Pascal, "Lord, I give Thee all," and you will find that

> "A life of self-renouncing love
> Is a life of liberty."

II. As you have two feet to walk with, so in this matter you have two steps to take. The first step, as we have seen, is that of full surrender. The second step

—if it be second, for in some cases it is first, and in all nearly simultaneous—is the step of faith. For this, also, it may be said of many, "Ye were forward a year ago." So long as that, or longer, you saw that there was a reality corresponding to "the blessing" said to have been experienced. But—*this* was *not* believing. You saw that you were incapable of producing this state of heart and soul—but *this* was *not* believing. You saw that Jesus was able, and, again, that He was willing to do this—but *this* was *not* believing. While some roundly assert that sanctification is by works, though justification is by faith, *you* saw that this was of faith also, of faith only—but *this* was *not* believing. You saw that there were grounds for faith—not in your frames, not in your feelings, which might change, but in "the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever"—but *this* was *not* believing. You got so far as to believe, that if you did believe, you would be blessed: but even unsaved sinners get that far, and sometimes continue unsaved still. No, in these matters seeing is *not* believing, knowing is *not* believing, believing that if you did believe you would be blest is *not* believing. Believing *that*—THAT IS BELIEVING, and *that* you, though "forward a year ago," *have* NOT DONE. That is what you *have now* to do.

You have come to the brink a score of times; now take the plunge—"launch out into the deep"—trust God in Christ utterly.

The moment has come for this—the moment when you must get off the perch of distrust, out of the nest of seeming safety, and on to the wings of faith; just such a time as comes to the bird when it must begin to try the air. It may seem as though you must drop to

the earth; so it may seem to the fledgling. It, too, may feel very like falling; but it does not fall—its pinions give it support, or, if they fail, the parent bird sweeps under it, and bears it upon its wings. Even so God will bear you. Only trust Him; "thou shalt be holden up." "Well, but," you say, "am I to cast myself upon nothing?" That is what the bird seems to have to do; but we know *the air is there*, and the air is not so unsubstantial as it seems. And *you* know the *promises of God are there*, and they are not unsubstantial at all. "But it seems an unlikely thing to come about that my poor, weak, wretched soul should be girded with much strength." Has God said it shall? "That my timorous, trembling heart should have peace." Has God said it shall? "That my tempted, yielding nature should be victor in the strife." Has God said it shall? for, if He has, you surely do not mean to give Him the lie! Hath He spoken, and shall He not do it? If you have a word—"a sure word" of promise—take it implicitly, trust it absolutely. And this sure word you have; nay, you have more—you have *Him* who speaks the word confidently. Yea, I say unto you, trust *Him*.

Is He not trustworthy—trustworthy to any degree—trustworthy for illumination, for sanctification, for consolation, for strength, for help, for love, for peace, for joy, for guidance, for every grace? Is there one of them to the production of which His power is not adequate? You know there is not one. Then

"Venture on Him, venture wholly."

Do not merely *dis*trust *yourself; trust* HIM. Do not only

"Relinquish all your earthly props,"

but *trust* HIM. The negative part of the matter you have done a hundred times; but the negative wire alone conveys no electricity. For that, you must grasp the positive wire too. You must trust God as truly as you distrust all else. "Now, therefore, perform the doing of it." Take the spring. It is only a moment, and then—"What then?" Why, then you will find yourself "in His Almighty arms," which are absolutely safe and infinitely strong. "All things are yours," and "all things are possible," when you have done this.

"Tell me what I am to trust God to do." I have told you often, but I will tell you once again. You are to trust Him to heal you, to help you, to strengthen you, to rest you, to refresh you, to rejoice you. "And what am I to expect Him to be?" You are to expect Him to be your Friend, your Keeper, your King, your Shepherd, your Spring, your Supply, your Strength, your all—in a word, your God. "And in what sense, in what way, am I to trust Him to do and to be all this?" In the strongest sense, but in the simplest way; not looking for rapture, not looking for excitement, not looking for anything; just to believe that He is all He proposes, and that He does, and will do, all He promises. To make the surrender of your soul, and believe that He accepts it; to yield Him your confidence, and believe that He owns it; to commit the keeping of your soul to Him, and to believe that it is and shall be kept.

And (having done this for yourself, your soul, your all, *once*) to repeat it for individual objects, actions, duties, again and again, as the occasion may require, putting yourself and your case perpetually into His hands, and abiding there, calm and confiding.

I do not know that I can tell you more exactly what to do than this. I have always found a difficulty in explaining to a sinner the final step to take for salvation; I find just the same difficulty—no more, and no less—in explaining to a believer what to do for sanctification. The fact is, the final step, or the first step—in fact, any practical step at all—must always be taken alone. The secret may be told by others, but the step must be taken by yourself. "There is no man when the water is troubled, who can put" you "into the pool." You must go down by yourself, as well as of your own accord. Yes, you must take the step alone—or, rather, realise that *there is no step at all**—that there is One at your very side better than any Bethesda, whose grace supersedes the troubling of the waters, whose "grace is sufficient for thee."

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." This is a time, not for consideration, but for action. Do not look any longer at the blessing; *live yourself into it*, for this life is learned by living.

Say, "I do not see far; but the little way I see, I will go. I do not know much, but the little I know I will do. I have but little to give; but I will do my diligence to give of that little; knowing that 'if there be first the willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.' I have not an experience precisely the same as others; I have not an experience pitched in any high key at all; but high or low,

* I emphasize this; for on re-reading this chapter, I fear I have conveyed the idea of a far greater *step* than the experience of many—and my own amongst the rest—would warrant. "Trusting Jesus, that is all;" and it may be done quite quietly, gradually.

feeling or no feeling, sink or swim, I venture to do this thing—I step forth upon the promise; I fall into the arms of my Saviour, henceforth to live or die,

> 'Simply trusting every day,
> Trusting, through a stormy way;
> If in danger, on Him call,—
> Trusting Jesus, that is all.'"

From Principle to Practice.

CONNECTIVE WORDS.

"ALL Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine" (John xvii. 10). "All Mine are Thine," that is consecration; "and Thine are Mine," that is faith. Christ, whose words these are, is our example in both. The Exemplar is far before the copy, immensely far, but it is there to be copied. Jesus says so of consecration, and Paul implies it of faith: Jesus when He says, "For their sakes I sanctify (consecrate) Myself, that they also might be sanctified" (consecrated): Paul, where, having given us illustration after illustration of the power of Faith, he names as the crowning instance Christ Himself, the "Author and Finisher of faith."*

"Forsake all," and receive all, are Christ's constant commands; and on these two commandments hang all the blessings of full salvation.

This we have tried to show in the preceding chapters almost with wearisome iteration. We hope we have made our meaning clear, and we trust that some have not only followed our line of thought but have carried it out into action; that in the quiet perusal of our pages they

* Not "of *our* faith," as in our English Version.

have—as quietly perhaps—made all theirs Christ's, and all Christ's theirs. If this has been done, then they have entered the glorious land, "the land of delight."* But they have only entered it, and after the entrance comes life in the land—the life, not without crosses, or cares, or conflicts, as we see so plainly in Israelitish type and in personal experience; and so, wanting to help men to guard the holy fire as well as to gain it, I propose, in the remaining chapters of this book to deal with a number of intensely practical matters which afford ample scope for putting in practice the principles already attained; only let it be repeated and remembered, that the practice cannot be attained till the principles have been grasped. Some careworn or sorrowful ones may turn to the chapter on sorrows or cares in hopes of finding peace or comfort; they will turn in vain unless they come with Christ, and even if they be Christ's they will not gain much so long as either their confidence or consecration be incomplete. But I trust that when we "come," we shall "come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ;" and approaching each subject, and the situation which each depicts, in this spirit, we may hope to gather daily strength for daily need, and so on the basis already laid to rear a superstructure which shall enable us to pass from PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE.

* Dan. xi. 41. Margin.

VI.

Conflict.

"Fear not. Remember [the world] is a vanquished foe. Attack it in My strength, as partakers of My victory. Fight against it, and treat it as under My feet, and made My footstool. Whenever it tempts you, depend absolutely upon My conquest, and you will find My grace almighty to crucify the world to you, and you to it. The main battle has been fought, the victory is gained, and the conqueror is already crowned in the name and person of all the redeemed. By faith, He gives them their share in His victory."—Wm. Romaine.

TWO extreme views are to be guarded against on this subject; one which holds that there is no conflict in the sinner, and the other which maintains that there is, or need be, none in the saint.

The former error, often reiterated, may be exploded at once by appeal to the common conscience of men. Even a heathen poet wrote, "Desire suggests one course, reason advises another. I see and approve the better, I follow the worse." Seneca could say, "I call ye gods to witness that the very thing I like to do, I dislike to do." And the Greek slave Epictetus, "When he who sins wishes not to sin, but to keep straight, it is plain that what he does, that he would not, and what he would not, that he does."

If any choose to infer from the similarity of this language to that of Rom. vii., either that Paul was describing his unconverted state in that chapter, or that these heathen, without knowing it, were converted men; I would say, I have nothing to do with the dilemma. I cite the passage not as parallels to Rom. vii. (as Alford cites them), but as proofs of the universal struggle between right and wrong in all mankind. I grant you that struggle assumes very different proportions in regenerate man; but the unregenerate also are pulled two ways; are haunted by good and bad angels.

So much for the existence of conflict in the sinner; but our chief interest concerns its continuance in the saint. If any were disposed to doubt that there is still "war in the gates," we should send him both to his Bible and to his experience.

The one calls life a warfare, bids the Christian fight, supplies him with weapons, and in such passages as Gal. v. 17-25, describes the struggle. Paul says to Timothy, "Fight the good fight," so clearly Timothy had conflict: says of himself, "So fight I," so clearly Paul had conflict: and James says to all Christians, "Resist the devil," so clearly all Christians have conflict. A book which holds such language most assuredly gives no countenance to the notion that conversion terminates the war. As little does it imply that some other stage in the Christian course here puts a period to it. The passages just referred to concern advanced Christians as much as those in the initial stages of the Divine life. There may possibly be a difference between us in reference to the flesh and to the devil. Our attitude to the one may be that of the delivered, to the other that of the combatant. Into these

niceties we do not enter: but that some conflict is left for all who are left in the flesh is patent on page after page both of the New Testament and of the Old.

But I would appeal not only to Scripture, but to consciousness in proof of the continuance of conflict. Is there any one upon earth who is not conscious of some clashing between duty and inclination?—between the duty of getting up on a winter's morning, and the inclination to remain in bed; between the duty of putting a "knife to" his "throat" when sitting "at a ruler's table," and the inclination to gratify his appetite too freely; between the duty of being calm under provocation, and the inclination to "fire up;" between the duty of being "content with such things as" he has, and the inclination to smart and chafe under divine disappointments or human indignities? Very trivial matters, you say, perhaps; very small sins, all of them. Nay; when we consider how much laziness robs devotion; how much indulgence of the palate injures the health of the body, and through it of the soul; how fatally, as Jeremy Taylor puts it, anger beats down the lark in its soaring and its song; how sadly fretfulness ruffles the temper and unfits it for either duty or devotion; if we remember all this, we shall consider these sins by no means small. Just here lies a clear gain attained by the saved soul. Whereas, for the unconverted, the conflict is about "judgment, mercy, and the love of God"—the weightier matters of the law; for the converted it is concerning matters less glaring, nay, once viewed as perfectly harmless. The grave gross sins have now so little power over him that they have ceased to be matters in dispute at all. His Waterloo has been fought, and he has now only

detachments of the enemy on a much smaller scale to cope with.

"Well, but cannot the same grace which brought down the greater bring down the less? And is not this" (as Mr. Dale well put it once) "the very advance lately made?" Certainly, but when these enemies are beaten, others appear —sometimes the old may reappear. We are to reckon ourselves dead to them; but they are not dead to *us;* and if anyone thinks they are, a sudden gust of temptation will be very likely to disabuse him of the error. But even if they should never show themselves again, Satan is quite prepared to shift his ground, and to fight the battle elsewhere, for of his emissaries still the name is legion. "But can you not imagine a Christian seeing a sin, the smallest sin, a duty, the smallest duty, so consecrating himself about the one, so repenting about the other, that Satan shall cease to torment him about it, and it shall not be worth his while to come; and so of sin after sin?" Certainly; but the foe, fertile in his assaults, will still find some spot which he can contest; nor can I imagine that this can wholly cease till the Christian can say, "The prince of the world cometh and hath nothing in me"—a blasphemous thing in any lips but Christ's.

For surely, though a man may live so as to feel, looking into the future, that he is steadfastly purposed to do the right (that if he were to die to-night, as Wesley said, he would go to the very places, carry out the very engagements, planned in the ordinary course of things, at the close commending himself to his Heavenly Father, lie down to rest and wake in glory), I cannot imagine any Christian feeling, "If I had this day to live over again, I would

wish no word unspoken, no act altered, no thought changed." Well now, wherever he could wish any of these things to have been other than they were, better than they were, *there* there was some ground to dispute with the enemy—there there was, or ought to have been, a battle. With Christians, as with the unconverted, there may sometimes be too little conflict—too little conflict because too little conscience.

The continuance of conflict then must be accepted as inevitable, but our aim should be to reduce it to a minimum; indeed, well-nigh to a vanishing point.

The Christian's conflict is a "GOOD FIGHT." Not only do we fight under a good Captain and in a good cause, but we fight with good hope. There are two ways of going into battle—and we all know there are two ways of coming out of it; but one of the best preparations for coming out successfully is to go in confidently, not with braggart self-confidence—that is the way of all others to ensure failure—but with humble yet steadfast Christian confidence. It will make all the difference in the world, whether we march to the field expecting defeat or expecting victory. Let a man crawl to battle with the crushing conviction in his miserable soul, "My sin has found me out, and is going to conquer me again"—and he is sure to be conquered. But the Christian man has no business to cherish such a coward's conviction for a moment: with the promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," "Fear not, I will help thee," and the fifty other "Fear nots," he has no business to harbour a doubt of success.

Shall I fortify this opinion by the words of some fathers

in the faith—of Romaine, for instance, who says, "Hope is fitly compared to a helmet, and it is called 'the helmet of salvation,' because it always saves;" who bids us, in obedience to the Word of God, to expect His help? "Face thine enemies, whoever they be, with holy boldness: for God is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy battles. Canst thou be afraid? Of whom or of what? Oh, vile unbelieving fear? Beg of God to save thee from it. Honour the Captain of thy salvation. Trust Him. Doubt not but thou art as safe, obeying His orders and expecting His help, as almighty power can make thee.

As to the general issue of the war, Mr. Good of Clapham writes—"Upon the whole, the actings of corruption get weaker, and the habit of grace strengthens in the soul." Mr. Faber* of Sherborne, while saying, "It is vain to expect in this world that duty will ever be unattended with pain, that while the evil affections of a Christian are left like the remnant of idolatrous Canaanites in the midst of the children of Israel to be a thorn in their sides, yet these lusts of the flesh are kept in a state of abject slavery to their new master . . . At times, indeed, as every believer knows by woeful experience, the house of Saul will appear to prevail against the house of David. Long and tedious is the war between them, a war which can only terminate with the extinction of one of the parties; yet, in the course of this spiritual struggle, it will be found that David waxes stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul weaker and weaker." And Scott (the commentator) goes farther, and says—"The regenerate person as really loves God, and as really desires to obey,

* *Not* the hymn writer.

honour, worship, and please Him, and for His sake to act properly towards his brethren, as angels in Heaven do; and at those times when his heart is enlarged in holy contemplation, he longs to be perfectly holy, obedient, and spiritual. Then the principles of the new man vigorously exert themselves, and the remains of corrupt nature, of the old man, lie comparatively dormant; the world is out of sight, or stripped of its attractions, and the enemies of his soul are restrained from assaulting him; though this sweet savour," he goes on to say, "is apt to be lost." Andrew Fuller says—"As every being is denominated by his governing disposition, so holiness is that from which believers are denominated in the Scriptures; it is that which gives them their character. They are in a very true sense sinners, but they are usually addressed as saints." Thus though the evil nature remains in the regenerate, and asserts itself in him from time to time, yet may it be kept down by the grace of God to such an extent that it shall be like a sea in a calm, not absolutely motionless as the ripple on the vessel's side shows, and at any time of such a nature that a gust of temptation might lash it into a storm, but yet for the most part tranquil and calm. So that the advanced Christian may not only write to the beginner, bidding him bravely to fight, and calling the conflict a good fight; but may write of himself, and say what Paul did—"I have fought a good fight." We do not promise you exemption from all battling. In this life there is no "discharge in this war." Every enlargement of the spiritual vision, making the sensitiveness of the soul keener, will reveal occasions of falling as unsuspected as soldiers in ambush; but we do promise you deliverance from definite enemies, wrestled with in the

strength of the Lord. We are great believers in the power of habit, and think that as much may be assigned to it for good as for evil. There are such experiences as "holy habits of soul" (Upham), and under these particular sins may be brought to almost complete submission. The most terrible places in our lives, places as awful as volcanoes in a state of convulsion, may become quiet and harmless as the flower-strewn lawn that clings to the crater of a volcano now extinct. We could give instances known to us, in one case of drunkenness, in another of debauchery, in a third of vanity, and in a fourth of irascibility, in which the conquest has been so complete, that the thing seemed to cease to be a temptation. How was it? you will ask. Tell me, for I would fain know, that I too may gain the victory. It was by nothing wonderful, just by the exercise of simple trust, for *this fight is the* FIGHT OF FAITH, not a fight of hope, you observe. The expectation of success is a good thing, as we have just been saying, but it is not everything. We are not told to build ourselves up on our happy hope, but we are told to build ourselves up on our most holy faith. Not a fight *for* faith merely; though there is that, there is more also; we are commanded directly as well as indirectly to resist the devil. "We wrestle," says Paul; and again, "So fight I," and "I keep under my body." It is called a fight of faith because the attitude for the combatant is an attitude of entire trust.

There are two ways of meeting temptation: the one, the way of will, putting a curb on one's appetites, control over one's temper—it is a way full of rigour, and full of risk; the other is the way of faith: in this the tempted

one, conscious of his own weakness, looks right away to Jesus. This has the manifest advantage of taking the eye off the tempter, off the temptation, off oneself, and fixing it on the Saviour. But it is not merely the engagement of the mind on a healthier subject than its sin; it is the turning to the stronghold by the prisoner of hope. Jesus never sees a soul seeking Him but He runs to its relief, for He is such a saving Saviour. Yet we are not sure that there are not cases in which we are called to fight rather than to "come hither to see the battle." The two figures of speech are, it must be remembered, only figures of speech, and may both be needed to set forth the full facts of the case. I often say it matters little whether it be a rest of faith, or a fight of faith, so that it lead to a victory of faith. But as often as (or if always, as some think) we are called simply to "stand still and see the salvation of God," we must remember that we are profoundly interested in the battle, in fact, our hearts are the battle-field; our position cannot be that of the great powers watching from afar the Eastern question, but of the principality trampled by the passage of armies, and torn by the talons of the vultures of war. It is over your soul, and for it, that the conflict rages. Satan and your Saviour are contending for it, and it is for you to say which shall succeed.

Appropriately to the fight of faith, the soldier going into this holy war is told "above all things to take unto himself the shield of faith" (Eph. vi. 16). David significantly calls it the shield of salvation, which shows us the blessed result of wearing such a shield; elsewhere he says (what God said to Abraham), that the Lord Himself is his shield, which is the same thing in other terms; for

it is not the faith that shields us, but the grace that faith grasps, the God that faith brings nigh.

"The prince of this world cometh," says our Saviour, "and hath nothing in Me;" and so his temptation fell into Christ's bosom, like flaming darts into the sea—hissing but instantly quenched. This, which, as Dr. Guthrie says, the sinlessness of Christ did for him, Paul says the shield of faith will do for us: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Let us always wear it, and wearing it, not give Satan an inch by daring to doubt the salvation of God.

We cannot close this chapter without attempting to meet a difficulty which may occur to some minds. How can there be conflict where there is consecration? I suppose that it is one of the many paradoxes which abound in practical theology. It is not easy to say how a will actually surrendered can conflict with God's will; yet it may do so, it may do so even and not sin, for it did in Christ. But the moment a desire different from God's desire is admitted into the soul, that moment we cross the border, and the conflict is no longer sinless but sinful. Therefore though the coming of conflict, and its coming again and again, be not contrary to our consecration, its continuance is. To cherish, to tolerate it for two seconds, is (to say the least of it) to mar the completeness of our surrender. So what we have to do is, the moment we find our mind going with evil, to say—"This is not for me now that I am God's. It is at variance with my vows. I pray 'Thy will be done.' I have given myself to the doing (and the bearing) of it; to allow this sinful thing so much as a moment's existence, even in thought, is to

undo all this. On the other hand, if I love God I must do it a hundred times over if need be, renewing my consecration every time; and it is not in the quiet closet hour of communion, but here in the heat of action, that I am to make good my surrender, and prove my consecration practical and complete.

VII.

Christ and our Crosses.

"I reign as a king over my crosses."—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

"And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death."—JONAH iv. 9.

IT was the most natural thing in the world; a thing that happens every day. Here was a man who had been sent on a long journey; sent on a long journey, as he thought, all for nothing. At length, after his hard toil, he promises himself a little holiday; but just as he is beginning to take it, his holiday is cut short, his rest is spoilt, his hopes destroyed. The gourd, under which he had sat down for shelter and rest, withered, and he was left exposed to the burning rays of an Eastern sun. It was very provoking. It was really a great cross. So Jonah thought, and so many another would think were he circumstanced like him.

Looked at indeed as God looked at it, it was a very small cross. With the contrast so sharply put between the great city that might have been destroyed, and the little gourd that was destroyed, the murmuring and

omplaining of Jonah seems absolutely shocking. But looked at as man looks at things, without these sharp contrasts and spiritual realities brought out, it was perfectly natural, and just what is happening perpetually.

We are not told, I think, whether Jonah left any children; I do not think we need to be. I fancy I know a good many of them. I fancy I know one of them particularly well. I am inclined to feel that I myself am naturally just like Jonah, one who likes things to move agreeably, and pleasantly, and easily, and who naturally is ruffled and disturbed, and excited when things will go wrongly, in fact will go *cross*. And so, starting from this story, I want to speak a little of *Christ and our crosses*.

What are they? What is their tendency? What is their divine intention? How should they be borne, and how may they be borne in the best way? These are the questions we want to ask about our crosses.

And first of all—*What are they?* By crosses, I do not mean sins. You sometimes hear it said of such and such a person—He has a very disagreeable disposition; that is his cross, you know. I do not like to call that his cross, because it seems too much like making an excuse for a man. It seems too much like saying, he is to be pitied, when we know he is to be blamed. No! I should rather say that the bad temper of *another* person—a person with whom you have to live—may be a cross. A cross may be, of course, and often is, an occasion of sin; but a cross, as I understand it, is not a sin itself.

Neither is it exactly a sorrow. A sorrow may become a cross; a sorrow may lead to a cross; but, in itself, a cross is not a sorrow. A person may have no illness

and no bereavements, and no calamity crushing him, and yet may have a great many crosses. Indeed, I think it is one of the compensations of life arranged by the Great Disposer of events, that while the poor have the hardest trials, the rich have the greatest and most frequent crosses. A cross is not a great mass of rock falling on a man to crush, but it is a great whirlwind of dust flying about to blind and irritate him. Yes! I understand by a cross, the fly in the pot of ointment—the "but" in the story of Naaman ["*but* he was a leper"]—the knot in the trunk of a tree—the stone in the else smooth and limpid stream. A cross is *something* that is *contrary* and very often something that is *chronic*. So it comes in our way and tends to impede our progress. Let me give you an instance.

A young lady who has been devoted to all the gaieties of fashion, is brought to see a more excellent way—to love her Saviour, to love the pleasures of the Kingdom instead of the pleasures of the world; she is ready to turn her back upon the things in which she once delighted, but she finds in her home a brother, or a father, or both, who rather make fun of her and her religion; who try to inveigle her into the old game of cards, and want to get her to run with them to the former "excess of riot." It is no trouble to her to give up the cards; she had rather a thousand times never play a game now; but it is a trouble to bear the satire and the scorn, and thus to have to run the gauntlet of all the opposition of those who are at home. One, who is so tried, told me the other day that *that* was just her cross.

Take another sort of cross. You go to a religious meeting; you go in a certain tone of mind, just wanting

something to chime with that tone; but the good man who takes the meeting, or one who comes to speak at it, is led into a different groove. He says, "Shibboleth," you say "Sibboloth;" and the jarring of that unexpected note is a cross.

Take another instance. You have made a plan for the day; after a great deal of trouble and hard work, you have arranged for yourself to have a little pleasure, a very innocent, very useful pleasure. Perhaps you have been keeping it as a dainty morsel for days—this little joy; but, alas! just at the time there comes a piece of business that has to be done; it cannot be put aside, or rather, it *can*, but it *must not*. So, after a little battle with yourself, a very little one, a mere skirmish, you make up your mind to put aside the pleasure again, perhaps to give it up altogether, and to accept the duty; but hardly have you set yourself down to the duty, to do it calmly and comfortably, with something like time to do it, than something else "crops up" more important and more imperative still; again your plans are upset; and this very duty has now to be done, if done at all, in a swift and slovenly way, very unlike that in which you like to do anything. This is a cross, a great cross.

Let us now look at the tendency of such disappointments. Will you forgive me if I say, that with *bad* men the natural tendency of crossing is *cursing?* When a great calamity falls upon a man he is struck dumb, but when a little cross stands up in a man's way he is disposed to knock it down, and if he cannot do that, then (if his natural tendency is strong) to utter a curse or an oath.

But if crosses lead bad men to curse, they lead better

men to crossness. A cross might almost be defined as that which tends to make a man cross. It does tend naturally to sour the temper, there is no doubt about it; it tends naturally to irritation, or, if not that, to agitation. It excites and disturbs and discomposes the soul. If only we might go to Tarshish when we want; and if, having gone to Nineveh, we might only have the gourd! If only people's temper would run sweetly, and all things about us would go smoothly, and men would never thwart us, and God would never disoblige us, what exceedingly amiable members of society we might be! Why, we should almost always have a smile. But as it is, when there are so many things that run counter to our wishes, so much work to be done, and so much worry over and above the work to be borne; so much that is annoying from our fellow-men, and so much that is against our natural desires from our God; really, it is perfectly natural that we should be put out, and quite inevitable. No, no; a thousand times, No. Natural if you will—in one sense of the word natural; but inevitable, never! So long as there is a God in heaven, so long as there is a Holy Spirit communicating God's power to earth, it can never be inevitable for us to be overcome by these faults; for never can it have been intended by God that this cross—erected by Him, remember—in our paths should produce these tempers in our lives.

"Intended by God," you say—"well, I never thought there was any Divine intention in the matter. I thought that these crosses just came." "Just came," my friend—when will you learn that there is nothing of which you can say that it "just comes?" Everything, little or great, agreeable or disagreeable, is appointed for you of your

God, and, being appointed, it must be designed, and being designed, it must be for *something;* and it is for you to find out *for what*. The Divine intention of crosses is to make character. I saw a man splitting a tree—oh, how easy it seemed! I saw another man sawing a piece of timber, and oh, how hard it was! But, my friend, you were created not merely to be a wood-splitter, but to *saw* the wood. He is the far abler, nobler man, that can do *that*. It was the Divine purpose to strengthen you for your work. God compelled you thus to learn to saw, and that never need be unless the wood were cross-grained and knotted to boot. Oh, yes! there is a reason for these crosses, and (another reason) they were meant not merely to make character, but to melt or to mould character. They are very disagreeable, but they tend to round off the corners, that are more disagreeable still. Have you ever noticed the shingle on your beach, and seen how the waves come up and dash the stones one against another, most disagreeably no doubt: and then, just as the pebbles are settling down to rest and dry, another great angry wave comes, and gives them another dash; and they have hardly got into position again, to bask comfortably in the sun, when a third wave comes, and now they are dashed together again; and so it goes on, half-hour after half-hour, and half-day after half-day? Well! but how round the pebbles are, and how smooth, and with what beautiful lines are they marked. Why, really, if they could think for themselves, they ought to be quite grateful to the waves for rushing in upon them, and rolling them about thus, and never letting them be quiet. And you that *can* thank God, you that can understand these things, you ought to take your crosses—the storms of life that trouble

and dash upon you—you ought to take them as kind instruments in God's hands, and be grateful to them and to Him. Will you try to look upon them in future in the light of this Divine idea?—to think when the cross comes up: "Now *this was not meant to make me angry; it was meant to make me curb my anger and get accustomed to temptations to anger without being angry;* so that in the long run there shall be more 'sweetness and light' in my character?" That is how character is made, and I do believe that, next to thanking Christ for *His cross*, when we get to Heaven, we shall thank Him for *our own.*

How are these crosses to be borne? Shall I give you an incident or two that comes up in my memory? I remember a venerable minister who has preached to his thousands in the great metropolis for years, talking of the interruptions in a London pastor's life. People wondered that he could take up the thread of his work where he left it off before the interruption began. I remember his quiet, gentle smile, and his saying that he would not think of anything else; he would not think of "giving himself airs," as it were, to be above being able to work for his Master in spite of the interruptions that might have been great crosses.

I remember another minister, a younger man, telling us how he had been going to take a service, and the train that he was travelling in was very late. Another train had to be taken to his destination, and he saw that he had not time to catch that train; however, when he got to the station he called a "Hansom," and directed the man to drive him as fast as possible to the other station. In the city they came to a "block." Here was another delay. "The last chance gone!" he said. Now he had

been reading the epistle in which Paul speaks of "all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness," and he felt that God would help him to keep patient and joyful through it all, because the promise is "strengthened with all might." And surely *all might is sufficient for all patience;* and so when the breakdown came, he said, "Now for all patience," and when the block came, "Now again for all patience," and so he kept himself cool and calm, though he could not but wonder what the meeting would do without him. When he got to the station of the second train something had occurred to prevent its starting at the proper time, so that he was still able to take the train and reach the meeting. "Now," said he, very humbly, "if I had got agitated I might have caught the train just the same; but at the journey's end, I should have been so ruffled that I should not have been ready to speak or pray; but as it was, 'all might' was adequate to 'all patience,' and I was ready for the meeting." Go and do ye likewise.

I have read an allegory of a great king who employed his people to weave for him, and directed them to come to him whenever they could not get on properly, and he would set them right. At the end of the day they came to hand in their work, and were in such trouble because they had so many mistakes: all of them but one. "How ever did you escape? How came you to do it so correctly?" "I went directly I found out a little tangle," was the reply. Even so take *your* tangles to your King, and whatever cross comes, go and tell the King; yes, go and tell Jesus.

Well, but besides the telling, and the trusting that is implied in it, there must be *submission.* "*Take up your*

cross," says Jesus. You have been treading on it, some of you, and that is the reason you get along so slowly. You have been tripping over it others of you, and that is the reason you stumble so much. You have been kicking against it, many of you, and that is the reason that you find it hurt you so badly. *Take* it *up;* take it up; that is the word of the Master. Have you ever thought of this,—instead of kicking against the cross, to be found carrying it? What a difference it would make, to be sure! "But *what do you mean by carrying* it?" I mean *accepting* it. Accepting the circumstances as sent of God, and sweetly, meekly bowing to His will in the matter. "Take My yoke upon you," saith He. "Take up your cross daily." Until you do this there will be no comfort and no blessing of God. Your feet will bleed; your knees will totter: your limbs will stumble until you learn to take up your cross and to carry it. Carry it to Jesus. Ah! that is where you are to take it; take it to Jesus. Just reverse the picture that you see in the "stations of the cross." It is not Christ that falls under His cross now: not Christ that needs to find a man to bear it for Him. It is a man that now falls under His cross, that needs to find Christ to bear it for *him*. Yes! that is where you may lay it—thank God for that. That is where you must lay it—trust in Christ for that. There was a cross once, great, and grim, and black, not like your little crosses. So dark and so fearful was it that one is ashamed to talk of our little troubles under the same name. And there was a Cross-bearer once who carried it till He broke down under it, and then was carried upon it; and the only way to carry our crosses is to get Him into our arms, Him into

our strength; and then, "strengthened with all might in the inner man," Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, we shall be strong enough to take up our cross and carry it after Jesus.

Ah! but, beloved, have you not found out that there is one thing you must do first? You must take your *sins* to the same cross, you must lay your sins on the same Christ; it is for those who have made Him the Sin-bearer that He is willing to be the Cross-bearer.

The counsels we have been giving you are just impossible to flesh and blood; they are only possible to living souls; they are only possible to saved souls. Get saved first, and then you may be sanctified, and your crosses will be a part of the means of your sanctification.

VIII.

Christ and our Cares.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all the distant and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel, how weak; we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer;
And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee?"

ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

ON no subject is there a greater contradiction between the World and the Word than on the subject of Care. If we look at the one, we find everywhere not only pain and sorrow, but discontent, disquiet, unrest, and anxiety. Here the indigent and unfortunate is groping his way painfully from effort to effort. There the prosperous and successful is speculating with vain and frivolous excitement, in hot haste to be rich. Yonder

lies the sick, full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day; and as much disturbed as he, the watcher by his couch, soon to become the weeper by his coffin Every one in the group shows himself to be a stranger to peace.

Now turn from the World to the Word, and you find that God is "the very God of peace;" that Christ is "the Prince of peace;" and that the Holy Spirit, the one and only time He assumed a bodily form, was likened to a dove, the very symbol of peace: the true disciple is called a son of peace, and "the fruit of the Spirit is—peace." Christ's greeting is peace, His legacy is peace. Of His sweetest sayings none are so often quoted, and, alas! none more often slighted than His promises—"I will give you rest;" "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

And yet, in spite of all this, men, and Christian men, have not rest; women, and Christian women, do thirst again. The world goes on in this respect very much as it might have done if such words had never been spoken, and the Church seems sometimes to vie with the world in trying, not how peaceful, but how peaceless it can be. The one says, in effect, "Such a promise looks very well upon paper. It was a pretty thing to utter—a proper thing to write; but the veriest dolt can hardly suppose that such extravagant assertions mean what they say. When Isaiah wrote: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,' he wrote in the language of poetry, and such language can deceive no one." Even the believer, though not acquiescing in such a representation to the full, acquiesces so far as to read the words of grace without ever expecting to realise them; sometimes, too, so mutilating

the body of the promise as to leave little but the bones, and those marrowless.

Now, taking it for granted (as surely Christians should) that of these two views, that of the Word, and not that of the World, must be right, *the problem is to find a solvent for care.*

I know some will say—"It is all very well to talk about rest and restfulness: go and preach it to the birds if you will; or if you must tell it to men let it be to comfortable people, who have no cares and but few sorrows; but there is no use coming to us in the bustle of competition, and the strain of calamity, with your silken, silvery speeches." Now, my friends, if you make up your minds at the outset that there is no use aiming at peace, there *will* be none, but believe me the thing is worth looking at; peace is possible, for it has been enjoyed.

> "There are in this loud stunning tide
> Of human care and crime,
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of the everlasting chime;
> Who carry music in their heart
> Through dusky lane and wrangling mart;
> Plying their daily task with busier feet,
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

A great step towards the solution of the problem is the *fair stating* of it.

They state it falsely who think, or pretend to think, it means exemption from misfortune or toil: "In the world ye shall have tribulation," is still true for all. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," is still true for most. We do not want you to expect nothing to suffer and nothing to do. Summer will not come for your singing, nor the wheels stop for your whistling.

They state it falsely who put it, as if it meant, want of forethought. "Forethought is commanded, and therefore foreboding is forbidden." "The same book," says one, "that points us to the raven, sends us to the ant." We should not, cannot, live a heedless life; but we should, for Jesus did, live a life sincerely trustful.

They state it falsely who push it into the region of relative suffering or sin, as though we were not to care for one another's sorrows, not to care for one another's souls. In such cases the very essence of holy living is to care a great deal. God does not wish us to be Stoics, crushing and killing all feeling, and trying to arrive at a state in which all things are "indifferent." There are deep wells of affection in the human heart, which are true wells of living water to human life, and to dry them up would be nothing short of a calamity. God does not mean to strangle sympathy; we are not forbidden to weep in a world in which Jesus wept, least of all are we forbidden to weep for souls. Christ's *tears** were shed with the sufferers at Bethany, but His *cries* were reserved for the sinners in Jerusalem. It was asked, at a conference at Hull, how the rest of faith could consist with concern for the salvation of men; and the answers given were: "There is a care which is born of selfishness, that is wrong; but there is a care that is born of love, that is right." "You are in sympathy with Jesus when you sorrow for souls. Paul was ready to be accursed for his unsaved countrymen; he owned also to one care, the care of all the churches; but this tender solicitude for lost or saved is a very different thing from the care that cankers, and the care that kills."

* John xi. 35, compared with Luke xix. 41. (Gk.)

The peace we want to see diffused is the furthest removed from indifference; it is not thoughtlessness, it is not thriftlessness, and least of all is it selfishness; it feels deeply, thinks soberly, and works seriously, being incapable of contemplating calamity or crime with a light heart, but it is supported the while by an inner peace, firm because founded on a rock. God forbid that we should encourage any heedlessly to incur debt, and face the future recklessly. We have no patience with the man who sails through business triumphantly, because he leaves the hard work to be done by others. We have no liking for Priest and Levite who can be witnesses of a burden which they will not so much as lift with one of their fingers; but we write in the hope of smoothing away a wrinkle here, and keeping off the gray hairs there, and so enabling men of God—in the words of a Church as sober as any in Christendom—to serve God "with a quiet mind." The burden and heat of the day is too hot and too burdensome to you, my brothers; there are too many Marthas, and too few Marys among you, my sisters. It pains me to see so many so oppressed, and that both may cease, "I would have you without carefulness."

You *should* be, for it is commanded. I have in my Bible (I wonder whether you who chafe so much, have them in yours?) words about green pastures and still waters, and peaceful habitations, and quiet resting-places. In my copy there is a benediction (have you lost it from yours?) put by God's Spirit into the mouth of God's priest, in which (Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26) *keeping*, *shining*, and *peace* are set forward as Jehovah's covenant blessings for Israel. In my psalter is a psalm, whose doctrine distils as the dew, dropping its healing balm upon every forlorn

and fearful believer (Psalm xxxvii.) "Fret not," "Fret not," "Fret not," is its repeated refrain; "Rest," "Rest," its reiterated counsel of peace. David's "Cast thy burden upon the Lord" shakes hands across the ages with Peter's "Casting all your care upon Him." Paul's "Be careful for nothing" (and what a world of care-dust is driven away before that "nothing"); "but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and" (the consequence only follows, remember, where the conditions have been kept), "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus;"—what is this but an echo, sweeter and sublimer, as the Gospel is more sweet and sublime, of Isaiah's holy hymn —"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee?" Yea, are not all comprehended in one word—the word of the Master—"I will give you rest?"

Now what do these assurances mean? They must mean something, what can their meaning be? Perhaps a simple story, and, as I am a minister, a minister's story may make the meaning more plain than any definition could. A certain church had to be rebuilt, and the burden of rebuilding fell more largely than in some cases on the pastor. A heavy burden it was; it pressed upon him by day, it pressed upon him by night, and once in a dream he seemed to himself to be toiling up a steep hill with the church on his back. Then a voice (it was the voice of Jesus) sounded in his ears, saying, "Give Me your church."

But other people besides ministers go heavily because of the oppression of care. In my country I have sometimes seen a mother carrying three children at once, one in each arm, and one slung on her back. You English

mothers are disposed to smile at such overloading. But I am not sure whether some of you have not a still greater burden in the maternal care you continually carry. Now He who said to the minister, "Give Me your church," says to the mother, "Give Me your children," and to the merchant, "Give Me your bills, your business, your perplexities; give them all to Me." "Nonsense," you say. "Will He pay the bills?" Yes, I answer reverently, for those who put their trust in His care, their hearts in His hands, He will; or, which is the same thing, He will send you, as He sent Peter, to the place where you can find the money to pay them with. I do not mean that He will work a miracle to extricate you from your difficulties, but He will arrange His providences—He is doing it every day; there are men and women all about you who can tell you He has done it for them—so as to show that He *does* take care of His children.

"I wish we could change places," perhaps you say; "I wish you could take the counter, and I the pulpit." Perhaps if you did you would find sermons almost as hard to make as bills to meet. The fact is, *for each we need a providence, and for each we may have it.*

You may be so cared for that you "shall not be afraid of evil tidings"—Black Fridays, and things of that sort: so comforted and calm that "when thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet; for the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." Yes, "this is the rest wherewith He shall cause the weary to lie down, and this is the refreshing."

The basis of this peace is God Himself. "*Thou* wilt keep him in perfect peace," says Isaiah. Other men have to

keep themselves; believing men have God to keep them. So that, whatever happens, they may boldly say, "All will be well." "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing." However poor I get I shall never want, however persecuted, I can never be forsaken. "They that seek the Lord shall not want *anything* that is good."

If the basis of peace is God, the secret of peace is *trust:* just trust, nothing more, and nothing less. Perfect peace is for the mind "stayed on Him." "It is with men as it is with machinery," says one, "if it goes without oil, it grinds and gets hot and gets out of order. Trust is the oil which keeps the wheels turning smoothly." And should we not trust God? Has He not sent us messengers to tell us that He cares for us, and will clothe us, and will keep us all our life long?

"Oh! what beautiful messengers those are that sit on two legs, fly with two wings, and send out of one little throat a whole breastful of texts, each one of which is a song of God to the believing soul: I heartily thank God for them. But did God die for the birds? Did He ever lay down His life for them? For us He died, and will He not after this 'freely give us all things?'" Mind, I do not say your freedom from care is to be of the same kind as the sparrow's; though even she buildeth her nest and provideth for her nestlings—showing foresight while she takes "no thought;"—but I do say that your tranquillity, as it is more intelligent should be more intense, for it is founded not on a Creator's kindness, but on a Father's tenderness and a Saviour's love.

But God has better witnesses than the birds. Men and women with the calm of Christ in their consciences, the peace of Christ in their souls,—men, like George

Muller, with hundreds of little mouths to fill, or like Haig Miller with mercantile affairs to transact, who tell us (and their every action, their whole aspect echoes their words) that—

> "The peace of Christ makes glad their heart—
> A fountain ever-springing."

Now, what God *has* done He *can do*, and what He is to them He can be to us. How sweet to think He can! He stands in our midst to-day, and calls boys with their satchels, soldiers with their knapsacks, mechanics with their baskets of tools, men of business with their rolls of bills, lawyers with their briefs, physicians with their critical cases; and, worse still, men of any class wanting work and having nothing to do; men in any position jaded, perplexed, perhaps overwhelmed with crushing sorrow; He bids them all welcome, and *begs of them all one boon—their burden*—craving only this, that they would leave it with Him. He is able to bear it—willing to bear it. Why should you persist in bearing it yourself? Is it not that you do not thoroughly trust Him; do not believe that He really means so to burden Himself with your cares as to release you from them?

I do not say that you are released from responsibility in the matter. It would be as unrighteous as it would be unreal to say that; but I do say, that the load instead of being borne by your shoulders, may be borne by your Saviour, and will be—in proportion as you realise the truth of His indwelling, and rest in it.

Yes. He is within you, child of God, and without shirking any duty, or sinfully avoiding any sorrow, you are just to let the weight of your load be supported by

Him, instead of trying to support it yourself. You are to slip from under the burden, and leave Jesus to be its bearer. It is a life of faith

"Trusting Jesus, that is all."

If there be another thing, and perhaps there is, it is submission to His will. "My God will supply all your need,"—"all your *need*," Monod reminded us, at Oxford, "not all your *notions*." Your notions may be a thousand a year, your need may be a hundred. Forgive the home thrust, for just here I am persuaded lies the bane of peace, viz., an unsurrendered will. Let a man content himself with the place assigned him by Providence, love God's appointments, "glory in tribulations," take "joyfully the spoiling of his goods;" and depend upon it he will, in nine cases out of ten, be a happy man. But, of course, if we kick against the divine counsels, "thrust with side and with shoulder," repine and rebel, and repeatedly set up our will in opposition to God's, then cares must come; peace is precluded by the very nature of things.

Thus consecration must keep peace with confidence. You may set it down as an ascertained fact, that *want of peace comes from want of faith*, or *from want of will*—want of will to do or to bear the will of God.

IX.

Christ and our Work; or, Tranquillity in Daily Life.

"Calm me, my God, and keep me calm,
While these hot breezes blow;
Be like the night-dew's cooling balm
Upon earth's fevered brow!

Calm me, my God, and keep me calm,
Soft resting on Thy breast;
Soothe me with holy hymn and psalm,
And bid my spirit rest.

Yes; keep me calm, though loud and rude
The sounds my ear that greet;
Calm in the closet's solitude,
Calm in the bustling street."

HORATIUS BONAR.

"UNQUIETNESS," says a writer whom I shall have frequent occasion to quote in this section, "*is the greatest evil that can come into a soul except sin*"—nay, when we think how near to us is rest (as near, namely as God is), must we not say unquietness *is* sin? And it certainly is the occasion of it. *It hinders prayer.* True, it sometimes drives us to a petulant petition; but often it is

like the storm wave, which, the more it leads the sailor to wish to find the harbour, the harder it renders it for him to make for it. *It stops usefulness.* For usefulness requires at once

"A mind at leisure from itself,"

and a soul that reflects the Saviour: but unquietness disturbs the leisure, and destroys the surface on which the reflection is cast. And, besides all, *it defeats itself.* The more the bewildered bird beats about the cage, the less chance has it of getting away. The first requisite for escaping our perplexity is a spirit of calm. "There is one that laboureth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind."*

Most important, then, is the subject before us—the subject of *tranquillity;* and not the less, but the more important, I think, because it is *not* tranquillity in great dangers, tranquillity in desperate emergencies, tranquillity in special temptations, but the smaller, yet the larger (because more frequent) matter of *tranquillity in daily life;*—tranquillity for the merchant in his counting-house, with the average bills to meet, bad debts to face; tranquillity for the minister in his study, with a sermon to prepare one hour, a lecture to deliver the next, with prayer-meeting and Bible-class to attend, and countless cases to attend to; tranquillity for the Member of Parliament, with committees and clients to meet, and "showers of letters thick as snowflakes" to answer; tranquillity for the mother, with her children to dress, and perhaps to teach, housekeeping to superintend, visits to pay, poor neighbours to look after, meetings to be present at, and,

*Eccles. xi. ii.

above all, with a home and a husband to make as bright as burnished silver, when all within in the one case, and without in the other, is as black as bankruptcy; tranquillity for the maid or matron, with all the tempers in the house, from that of the mistress to that of the scullery-maid, to study,—with all the rooms in the house, from garret to basement, to keep clean; with a hundred agreeable things going on in which she has no share, and a hundred disagreeable things from which she has no escape. How tranquillity may be maintained in the midst of such a medley as this is what we want to discover. It is a difficult problem, but "it is the problem of life: to solve it is to live."

The first thing towards its solution is to believe it solvable. And is not that only to believe in God? For surely our God would never put us in any position in which peace is impossible; and the Christian well knows where to find the explanation of all mysteries, and of all miseries, too—viz., with Him upon whose shoulders is the key of the house of David. There are positions of business so perplexing, of worldliness so engrossing, that peace is out of the question; but these are not the positions in which the great Captain has posted His sentinels.

Let us make sure of two things—that our occupation is a calling, a something to which *God can call*, and that it is *our* calling, the very work to which *God has called us.* I can conceive nothing more carnalising than for a man to remain a merchant when conscience tells him he ought to be a minister; except, indeed, for a man to continue a minister when conscience says he has neither gift nor grace for such ministry. But this being settled, the "hall

mark" being on our life that proves it to be genuine silver, whatever the pattern, and whatever the vessel, God's hand is willing to use it, and God's Spirit to fill it; and what He can use and fill He can make—you may be quite sure of this—patient and peaceful, and fitted for every good work. Be a man statesman or soldier, merchant or mariner, be his avocation never so secular, never so agitating, "God is able to make all grace abound." Yes, if my occupation be a *lawful* calling, and be *my* appointed calling, tranquillity in it is a possibility.

But where shall it be found? How?

"Many a burden, many a labour,
Many a fretting care;
Busy footsteps coming, going,
Little time for prayer.
Duties waiting on my threshold
Will not be denied:
Others coming round the corner
Crowding to their side.
How shall I their number master?—
How shall I get through?
How keep calm amid the tumult?
Lord, what shall I do?"

Do! It is the old story. It is the old question about *doing;* the question that the sinner asks in reference to getting rid of the guilt of sin, instead of remembering that the work is *done;* the question that the tempted asks in reference to pressing temptation, instead of remembering that there is One who "worketh in" us "to will and to *do.*" And so, again, in reference to this matter of tranquillity, we are continually pressing the question, "What shall I *do?*" when we have need to remember it

is not so much in *doing* as in *ceasing to do*, that we shall find the secret of peace. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength;" do not let God have to add, "but ye would not."

Another name for tranquillity is self-possession. David speaks of his "soul being in his hand;" and if this is not the reference there, the Son of David says, "In your *patience* possess ye your souls." "Examine often," says St. Francis de Sales, "whether your soul be really in your hand, or stolen from you by some passion or disturbance." It is not an enviable moment when, just mounted, you discover that your horse and not yourself is master. But it is worse to feel that, instead of your mastering details and drudgeries, the business accumulations, the vexations of work; that drudgeries, business accumulations, vexations are *mastering you*. Somehow or other we must retain presence of mind, we must keep self-possessed.

The secret of tranquillity is *trust*.

Let us have confidence in the promises of God; they are large enough, and liberal enough; and let us remember that the *Promiser* is ever greater than the *Promises*, and that no words, even of God, can express the ground of calm confidence we have in Him who is the Rock of Ages. Oh, trust Him! trust Him, trust Him right through! Believe that He is going to undertake all for you; believe that He is going to guide you; believe that He "will hold your right hand and help you;" believe that He has purposes of grace which He will surely perform and carry out; not in *your* way, or in *your* time, but in His own, so that "He shall bring forth judgment unto victory." Look into God's face—look into God's heart,

and then doubt Him if you dare, and be disquieted if you can.

> "How can I ever careful be,
> While such a God is mine?
> He watches o'er me night and day,
> And tells me, 'Mine is thine.'"

Let us have confidence in the *purposes* of God. The thought occurs in the writings of Goulburn, Adolphe Monod, and others, that the Lord Jesus owed that wonderful calmness which marks His life—a calmness that never forsook Him, whether teaching or travelling, however engaged, however tried—that He owed *this*, I say, very much to the fact that He felt that His Father had a plan for Him; not a plan for a lifetime merely, but a plan for each day; and that He had but to discover what the plan was, then to carry it out; and so, however puzzling and perplexing the maze of duties through which He had to thread His way, nothing ever perplexed or puzzled *Him*, because, putting His hand in His Father's hand, He just walked in paths prepared for Him.

Well, now, what if God should have a plan for every one? What if God should have a plan far you? In such case—and surely it is the true case—everything we have to do, everything we have to bear, comes to us as part of a pre-arranged plan. Things that disturb our work, things that upset our purposes, things that thwart our wishes, interruptions, annoyances, are all part of the plan—God's plan—and should be met accordingly. There are so many holes and so many pegs before you, and your business is to put the pegs one after another into their separate holes. But then, remember, if the pegs be purposes, and the holes be hours, you must take care not

to spend two hours over what ought only to occupy one; for, if you do, you must of course expect your arrangements to be upset. But what if you have done this? What if you have blundered and got bewildered?—have lost time and lost temper, too, perhaps? Is the whole pattern of your work inevitably tangled? No. God never requires of you more than one thing at a time, and though your neglect, or delay, or disordered senses have brought you into difficulties, He does not desert you, or even demand of you to make good your error. But He requires you to do *this* moment's duty—a duty which that discomposure has occasioned—the duty, namely, of confessing your sin, and of seeking afresh the blood of sprinkling. You should do this at once, in the midst of the market, in the midst of the *mêlée*, and then go on as a forgiven soul, asking, as you take up again the somewhat tangled threads, "What, under these altered circumstances, would God wish me to do?" and then going and doing it as quietly and composedly as though no disturbance had happened.

This leads me to say that if *faith* be *the secret* of tranquillity, *patience* is *the support* of it. Scripture often combines the two. In the Revelation* we read of "the patience and faith of the saints;" and in Isaiah we are told, "He that believeth shall not make haste"—*i.e.*, he that has faith will not be impatient. Let me entreat you *not to be impatient with* God. Alas that we should have to say it—how many are! Perhaps we must ask for something deeper than patience: we must ask for submission. God may have different views of life from yours. Your view may be, making a thousand a year;

* Rev. xiii. 10.

God's view may perhaps be, that you should make only a hundred. "Yes," you say, "this is just one of the hard, narrow ways He brings me through." Nay! is it narrow for God to wish to lead you into a place in which the soul and not the body shall live; in which you shall not have a house adorned with every article of luxury, but a spirit adorned with every characteristic of beauty—so that you shall not merely have passing pleasures through the day, but that you shall have pleasures to all eternity?

See that which is spiritual or eternal in God's design, and then ask, is it not you that have narrow thoughts of life; and God's thoughts, are they not large and lofty?

Let us live, then, within the will of God—not merely crossing it here and there, but walking in it; for, the moment we get outside the will of God, we are sure to get out of our peace. Do not be impatient with God, then; He will bring forth judgment unto victory. He will avenge you, He will feed you, He will clothe—care for you. In the right time He will do all the right things for you, and you shall have everything that can bless, everything that can bring you near to Him.

Do not be impatient with your FELLOW-MEN. Quickness of spirit and quietness of spirit do not go well together. If you are quick-tempered, swift to speak to those about you, you are almost sure to disturb this tranquillity which you are seeking. Very often the best thing to say is—forgive the solecism—to say nothing. "Turbid waters often clear simply by standing." If your children worry you, remember what a worrying child you are to your Father in heaven. If your servants try you, remember what a trying servant you are to your Master in heaven. If your neighbours, or friends, or the people with whom

you are engaged in business, are a perpetual thorn in your side, remember that you are perhaps little better than one of the thorns growing on the tree of life. God has long patience with you—well may you exercise long patience with others.

Do not be impatient with YOURSELF. Did you ever think of it? I never did, till I saw it the other day in the writings of St. Francis. He says, "Let the very chidings of *yourself* be calm and gentle, so that even they shall not disquiet you. When some trifle disturbs your mind, you are vexed because of it, and afraid. This fear weakens your mind, and makes it sad and unsteady; it displeases you, and so begets another fear lest the first be wrong; and thus you get more and more confused. You fear being afraid, and then you are afraid of fearing; you are vexed at the vexation, and then you are vexed at having been vexed." I have seen people, in the same way, get into a passion, and then be angry because they had lost their temper! Just like the circles on water when one throws in a stone, one spreading beyond the other without end. "When we discover that we have been wrong, we should so gently bring ourselves to the foot of the Cross that we shall go right for the future, rather than increase the wrong by over-agitation."

To faith and patience add *recollectedness*. And here take an old illustration. A little girl, gathering strawberries upon a high bank, with one hand carefully holds her father's and with the other gathers the fruit. But seeing a great cluster of rosy berries, and being very impatient to reach them, she looses the hand that she may get the fruit, and instantly falls from the top to the bottom of the bank. Is it not so with you, child

of God? You go forth in the morning with your Father's hand in yours, but in the middle of the day you see such a rush of work that you think you must allow no other thought to intervene; so you let go the hand, and of course fall right down and lose the peace. Whatever we are doing, and wherever we are going, we must always keep hold of the hand of God. There is no other secret of rest, there is no other source of quietness, than His perpetual nearness. Remember what He said to Moses: "My presence shall go with thee"—and then it follows as the light the day—"and I will give thee rest." We could not have His presence without having rest; and I am sure we cannot have rest without having His presence. So let us live and remain in the presence of God. "Every morning compose your soul for a tranquil day, and all through it often recall your resolution and bring yourself back to it. If something discomposes you, do not be upset or troubled, but, on discovering it, humble yourself gently before God, and try to bring your mind into a quiet attitude. Say, 'I have made a false step; now I must go more carefully.' Do this as often as you fall. Above all, do not be discouraged. God will uphold you with His hand; and if He should let you stumble, it will only be to show you that without Him you would fall altogether, and to teach you to hold His hand the tighter." And with this advice of a recluse of old, agrees the experience of a man of business of the present day: "It needs a great deal of grace to live for God in business, but I found God could enable me, by committing myself to Him in the morning at home, and then afterwards when the rush was too great, shutting myself up in my office, and falling on my knees." So a

young shopwoman lately said, "Such teaching was new to me; but since I have learnt it, when a customer comes in, I lift up my heart, and ask Jesus to help me so to serve him as to please God and my master. And when worried, and there is no time for formal prayer, I just call upon Jesus, and that is enough. He comes and calms me." Go on working, not dreaming; watching, not sleeping; praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks; "and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever." *Amen!*

There are some of my readers, it may be, who have no possible right to have a quiet spirit. How can that spirit be quiet which is in danger? How can that spirit be quiet which is condemned? You must come to Christ; you must come to the Cross; you must get a new heart and a right spirit before you can have tranquillity, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." God is the Fountain of each. "All my springs are in Thee;" and so my prayer is—

"Give Thy strength to meet my weakness;
Give a heart at rest;
Give a childlike, trustful spirit,
Leaning on Thy breast.

Thou canst still the wildest conflict—
Bid the billows cease;
Thou canst fill earth's busiest moment
With Thy perfect peace."

Some similarity may be found between parts of this chapter (which appeared in the *Evangelical Magazine*), and parts of the last (which appeared in the *Pathway of*

Power). But each is inserted here, because the scope of each is different. *That* was a plea for peace in critical emergencies, *this* is a prescription for it in the details of daily life. And I am tempted to add a further prescription, though it may be already familiar to most of my readers, having appeared in a little envelope-book,* for the blessing on which I am grateful, humbled, and amazed. The man who had more tranquillity than any of whom I have ever read, was the man of whom it is said, that he did everything as if he had done nothing else before, and would have nothing else to do afterwards. Contrast this with the conduct of the ordinary man. Can you not fancy a child coming to its mother and saying, "What is father always thinking about? When I ask him to play with me, he frightens me by his frown; when I want him to read to me, he seems too tired even to think of it; and if I touch him—well, he seems so '*touchy*;' what is father always thinking about?" Ah! well, the wife knows, and good reason has she to rue that habit of "always thinking about" something, instead of having the mind free, the heart ready, and the hand open, for some of the endearments and enjoyments of life. My own experience teaches me the value of living by the moment. I have had few good angels so good as the power of throwing off work when work is done, and few bad angels so bad as the habit of weighting the work to be done now with the burden of work to be done another time. It has spoiled the enjoyment of many a recreation, but that is a small matter; it has marred the fulfilment of many a duty, and that is a matter by no means small. It has taken the nerve out of my arm, and when the work, so sin-

* "Live in the Present." *One halfpenny.*

fully anticipated, has come to be done, it has often been done worse rather than better, for the strength stolen *from* it as well as *for* it by this pilfering of the future. Misgivings about the providence or grace of God are at the bottom of this wearying worry. Can you not trust Him as to all that concerns you at this moment of time, forgetting the past, and leaving the future, for, as a father in the faith* said once, "My Jesus will be alive to-morrow."

* Rev. Samuel Martin.

X.

Christ and Christian Work.

"Would to the Lord, I had not a myself, but Christ—not a my lust, but Christ—not a my ease, but Christ—not a my honour, but Christ. Oh, sweet word! 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Oh, if every one would put away himself, his own self, his own ease, his own pleasure, his own credit, his own twenty things, and his own hundred things, that he setteth up as idols above Christ!"—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

WE have been speaking of Christ's relation to us in *our* work, but what about His relation to us in *His?* Surely that must be something still nearer, still more precious and powerful. If to us to live—even to live our common life—be Christ; if in ordinary things "God worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure," still more emphatically may we find this to be so in the part of life expressly lived, and the kind of work manifestly done, for Him. Surely Christ's work should be entirely Christ's working.

True, God is as willing to fill the vessel of clay as the vessel of gold, and to moisten with dew the daisy as the camellia; the fact being that "He filleth all in all," occupying each to its greatest capacity. He will dwell in us and

walk in us at all times; and what more than this can He do at any time?

Yet I do not know; possibly preparations of heart, connecting us more immediately with the Divine, may be indicated in the narratives like those in Acts xiii., where Barnabas and Saul were "separated" and "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" for missionary service; or like that in Acts iv., "where they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." In any case this we do find, that the same man who says of his *life* that it was not his, but Christ living in him, says of his *work* that it was not his, but "the grace of God which was with him."*

Returning from Oxford in the flush of fuller life, found at the Union Meetings, having to address my Sunday-school teachers, I startled some of them by saying, "I want this day to be an era in the history of our Sunday-schools. In some schools (I hope and believe better of ours) the best way would be to revolutionize the whole institution—to change every teacher, every superintendent; and I do believe that God wants many of ours (perhaps all in some sense) changed, wants to see a new teacher at his class here, a new secretary at his post there, a new superintendent at his desk yonder, and a new pastor in his pulpit here. Yes; it may be hard for us to give way, sad to us to go; but it will not be hard when we know who is to come, when we know to whom we are to give place. JESUS is He that should come. Jesus it is for whom we are to make way; so that in the future there may be Jesus at the senior Bible-class, Jesus with the little infants, and Jesus at every class between; Jesus

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

teaching, Jesus singing, Jesus praying, Jesus preparing, Jesus visiting, Jesus everywhere, Jesus in everything;—all and only Jesus; we resigned, dismissed, and Jesus come instead. Man will still see you and me in our places. There need not be one teacher, one officer removed, if all will accept the change; but yet, in very deed, there will be absolute change in many directions, and some change in most. For self will have to go, and the Saviour will have to come, so that each may say, 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' but I labour 'more abundantly' than ever, 'yet not I, but the grace of God which is with me.'"

It was not a figure of speech I thus used. In an absolutely real way, all the more real because it is spiritual (for spiritual realities are the only absolute realities), the Lord Jesus is prepared to come unto you, the worker, to take up your work and to do it, not *for* you, but by you and through you. He is prepared to do this: are you prepared to accept the conditions—the conditions on which alone so stupendous a mercy can be bestowed, the conditions of absolute surrender and of absolute acceptance? We have the surrender in Paul's "Not I," the acceptance in Paul's "the grace of God which was with me." These two are the negative and positive poles of the battery by which this thrill may be communicated.

The negative pole first, *i.e.*, the pole of human inability. "Not I." Paul is very fond of this. He says in Rom. vii. 20, "No more I that do it, but sin." It is something when a man can say that. He says in Gal. ii. 20, "Not I, but Christ." It is everything when a man can say that.

And here he says the same, only he applies it to one

department of life—viz., Christian work. In this assuredly we soon are taught the lesson of human inability, finding, like Luther's friend, that "old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon."

So a young teacher goes full of life and of love to his first class; he is going to carry all before him. Other teachers have failed: no wonder; they were cold, they were irregular, they were unprepared, they did not follow up their teaching by visiting. He will do all these things. And for a time he does, and for a time he seems to succeed; his enthusiasm is contagious. He does fire his class; but by-and-by the fire begins to burn low, and the enthusiasm dies out—in them if not in him. These who gave him hope, give him anxiety; the benches are not always so full, and if they are, the scholars sit listless; or if ever so regular, never so interested. They are not changed. Flesh and blood make a portcullis to keep him out; taste and habit a *chevaux de frise* to keep him off. He soon finds that to touch the heart is God's work, and with God we must leave it. "Not I" must be written on every arrow that is to reach the heart. Every one admits this in theory, and most in practice, but what Paul is driving at is another and a more sweeping sort of inability. It is not mere inability to produce results, but *to do the work;* and here he comes in contact with common opinion. For what is more common than to hear, "You work, and leave the results to God." But Paul had learned something more of his weakness than this. He had learned that God must do the work as well as bring the results. God must do the work, or there will be no results. When we speak of God as doing the work, we mean, of course, in and through you.

Some have learnt to say "Not I" in a very practical sense. They have discovered that spiritual work does not depend on thews and sinews, that when weak, very weak in frame, they are strong in the Lord, and that in Him even they may do something.

So have you seen frail men with disease in every limb, weak women with pain racking every joint, entering upon work from which not merely other weak ones shrink, but at which strong men turn pale, and from which they turn away.

Those who perform prodigies of faith are often sufferers from physical weakness. The Divine elixir is life-giving though it be conveyed in an earthen vessel, and a broken one too.

Many who have got above setting any store by physical strength yet think a great deal of mental strength. No doubt it is a blessing, for it is one of God's gifts; but gifts are nothing to grace, gifts are nothing without grace. Words and works and thoughts which are our own are nothing, and will do nothing. It is only the words and works and thoughts of Jesus that will be anything or do anything. The others will die, however fine; these will live, however feeble.

If this were kept in view, not only by Christians for themselves, but by Churches as to those ministering to them, how differently, how divinely would Church-work be done.

At present nothing is more painful than to see what strong faith congregations have in wealth and rank, in brilliancy of eloquence and gorgeousness of service; and what weak faith they have in spiritual power unadorned by human attractions. The world seats itself in the

Temple of God, showing itself that it is God, and only too often the Church comes in and falls down and worships it. Every one admits that God is the first cause from whom all good things do come; yet nearly everybody persists in looking to second causes as though they were the real springs of spiritual life.

This is conspicuous at the times when a pastor is to be appointed to a vacant church, a chief pastor, perhaps, in whose election the fiat of the State is everything, and the prayers of the Church or even of the Chapter are nothing. In other and more frequent appointments patronage has almost superseded prayer. Not to speak of cases in which Christian men shut their eyes to the sin of the traffic in the cure of souls, it is sad enough to see the secular spirit which operates in a more insidious way in all quarters. No wonder that pastors are restless and people are restive where this state of things prevails.

The same thing is noticeable in the conduct of public worship. "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Never was there an age in which there was so much attention to the proprieties of public worship. We build better churches, build better organs, secure better choirs. In some churches every sense is appealed to, in others every kind of culture is laid under contribution; there is everything, everything but one thing, and that, alas! is the one thing needful.

The wave of Ritualism has affected many who are not Ritualists. "It would be useless to deny," said a very Puritan of Puritans to us, "that we have all, more or less, come under its influence;" and in some respects for good, but how often for evil; how often where false

doctrine would not be tolerated, or even thought of; yet does it seem as if architect and organist had conspired to sacrifice simplicity, naturalness, and spirituality to æsthetics, and as if pastor and people silently succumbed, or perhaps even loved to have it so; but even where the conspiracy has not been made, or has not succeeded, the absence of evil does not always insure the presence of good—the presence of God.

As a venerable servant of Christ said to us a few years ago in a company of ministers, "You have the stones all in their place, you lay the wood in order, and the sacrifice upon the wood; you take endless care about the accessories and the accompaniments, but have you the fire—the fire from heaven? and, if not, of what avail is all the rest?" "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high."

The remedy for all this is a return to that great article of all ancient creeds—"I believe in the Holy Ghost." We must not only get to the end of self, but to the beginning of God; and to more than the beginning: not merely let go the snapping cords of human weakness, but lay hold upon divine strength. No tying on of flowers to a dead branch, no galvanizing the limbs of a dead body will suffice. We must be "baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" our praying must be praying in the Holy Ghost; our singing must be singing in the spirit, though with the understanding also; and our preaching must be preaching "the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Then there will be things which the angels will desire to look into. The coming of Christ was hailed by some,

and His ministry by many, but His popularity waned, the condition of the Holy One drew tears from the eyes of the daughters of Jerusalem, and His Crucifixion won here and there a convert; but when the winnowing process took place the whole number of the names together, in Jerusalem at least, did not exceed one hundred and twenty. But now mark; on a certain day, in the same city, the same men who had preached before preach again, and their words are winged and their arrows are piercing, and three thousand of their enemies lie wounded on the field confessing the power and the love of Christ! What is the difference? What can account for the new power? The answer is: "The fire of the Lord fell." The Holy Ghost was come, therefore the conviction was wrought and the confession was made. I think that all these eighteen Christian centuries have hardly revealed to us the significance of that Pentecostal fact; hardly made us sensible of our absolute helplessness in the absence of the Holy Ghost, and of His absolute power when present. Let us remember that faithlessness in our own efforts is not faith in God. We have grasped the negative pole, but from one wire we can receive no shock; we must take hold of the positive wire, and have faith in God.

We have hitherto spoken of Christ's connection with Christian work as securing—and it is the only security for it—that it shall be rightly done: but it needs also that grace should be given to make men willing in the day of His power—willing to be workers—and guidance to show them how to work, and where, when they are willing.

Impulse that the missile may be sent forth, and direction that it may take the right course and really reach the mark—both of these also we have in Christ. There is so

much that is chilling in the atmosphere of the Church, and so much that is positively petrifying in the atmosphere of the world, that it requires a very strong motive indeed to induce men to give themselves to serious efforts for souls; but this motive is found in the love of Christ. Somehow even vile men cling by one hand to what is noble, while the rest of their life is saturated by all that is base and degrading. They will give their company to knaves, their money to publicans and harlots, and somewhere in their hearts (though it be a sepulchre) they hide away the memory of some banished angel—the love of a mother, or a sister, or a dear dead child, or some other torn from them in earlier and happier days. And if so with the worst, how much more with those in whose hearts there is the stirring of something better? "The love of Christ constraineth" them—constraineth them to efforts that seem like an infatuation to others, to endeavours which earn for them the reputation of fanatics, as for him who was not only said to be mad by the philosophic Roman, but thought to be beside himself by the Christian Corinthians. St. Paul's at Rome is in the midst of a wilderness where no man can live; St. Paul's in London is in the midst of a multitude which is the wonder of the world. The former has its sublimity doubtless; the latter is more sublime, and more symbolical of the man who had less of the hermit about him than any man who ever lived. He had scores of converts, whom he considered his children; he "had a thousand friends, and lived a thousand lives in each." Now all Paul's labour was a labour of love; and love has set to work and sustained many more labourers since, and perhaps never more than in this much-maligned nineteenth century. The sick, the

sad, the sinful, the ignorant, the infirm, and the hearty workers too, soldiers, sailors, cabmen, policemen, postmen, navvies on the line, carpenters at the docks, mill-hands in the factories—all sections of society, all classes of workers, seem to have had some friends raised up from them of God, that none may be able to say, "No man cared for my soul." No doubt the increase of population makes it very difficult to overtake ever-accumulating masses of iniquity; but still the variety of works and the multitudes of workers is on the whole encouraging, and—yes, we have proof on every hand that the love of Christ is still a living power; no unimportant factor in human calculations. Now what is more needed than any one thing for the maintenance "of good works for necessary uses," is that the face of Christ, His unveiled face, should be kept constantly before the view of Christians: for to see Him is to love Him, to know Him is to know that He loves us, and

> "'Tis sweet to do a little thing
> For One that loves us so."

That charity may reign the love of Christ must rule. Where it becomes a passion, "His people shall be volunteers" (so an eminent Hebraist renders it), "in the day of His power; like the dewdrops from the womb of the morning Thy young warriors come unto Thee." But even "pure minds" need to be stirred up "by way of remembrance." So keep the lamp burning—the lamp of love. Never let the flame die out. Never let it burn low. Give it fresh supplies of golden oil; often replenish it with the dear love of the dear Lord. Thus, and thus alone, can you hope to find courage to face the tremendous responsibilities of having a dispensation of the gospel committed unto you.

The valley of dry bones is so vast, the vision of Judgment so appalling, that no wonder as He swept the horizon of all sorrow and universal sin, Jesus could find no place for idlers in His vineyard, but laying His hand —soon to be nailed to the cross—on the whole Church, gave to every man his work. But He does not expect impossibilities: He requires all to do something, He requires none to do anything beyond his strength—or rather, as every spiritual work is beyond the strength of man, He asks work only in the Spirit, yet bearing relation to our opportunities and ability. So it is almost as necessary for us to find out what our work is, as that we should remember that all have some work. For want of this, willing hands go idle, and wasted lives lie on every side. In the glittering marble fane that rises in the plains of Lombardy, when the morning sun streams down it shines upon thousands of statues; now every statue has its place, its pedestal, its niche. So should it be in the true Church of God: if sculptured statues need their niches, much more do living saints. Have you found *your* niche? Are you doing your work? You may, if with whole-hearted consecration you cry, "Lord, *what* wilt Thou have *me* to do!" He that giveth wisdom in works of all kinds, assuredly will not withhold it in this kind of work; only we must be willing to be anything—nothing —that He may be glorified. The varieties of work opening now are very great; some are sons of consolation, and may find their sphere in breaking the news of bereavement to the widow, or drawing to Christ the orphan; others, who would make clumsy hands at administering comfort, make excellent hands at administering medicine; others have a genius for organization or a faculty

for finance, and may turn these business talents to account for the Church and for Christ; others have the gift of healing, if we may so call that delicacy of touch that suits sensitive souls; others are apt to teach, and should seek to speak for Jesus to groups in cottage meetings, and to the lambs of the flock in schools; some have a talent for conversation, and can do a hundred times more by taking a score of people in hand, one by one, than by talking at once to all the score; some have good social powers, and are given to hospitality: such might seek out the stranger and the young, and by asking them to their homes win an influence over them, and thus extend the gospel in a simple way—yet just their Master's way—of the blessedness of which neither they nor anyone else could be well aware; while others, poor themselves, might make many rich by gentle words, or, if they have not even these, gentle looks, as they hand some apt and happy harbinger of blessing to those who are ignorant and out of the way; thus there is work enough for every man, and for "every man his work." The Sunday before the Brighton races, one of my people approached a group of betting men at the Railway Station with tracts in her hand. A gentlemanly man stepped forward and said, "I want a tract called 'The Debt is Paid:' probably you have it." When told that it was not to be found in the parcel, he said, "I must have that tract somehow: it was given me once, and now I cannot rest without it." His name and address were left, and the tract has been sent him, who can say with what results? His companions too stopped and joined in a most interesting conversation on the best of things.

A man in the Sussex county hospital was heard mur-

muring, "Lost, lost, past all hope in this world and that to come." A tract was placed in his hand by this same Christian visitor: next morning she was called away. Six months afterwards, again visiting the hospital, she halted at the door of the ward, looking round to see if there were a familiar face, and saw a happy, smiling one turned upon her. Beckoned to the bedside, "I do not know you, my dear friend," she said. "Not know me?" he replied; "why, I am the young man you gave the tract to six months since; I found peace through reading it, and am so happy now." Truly he was the picture of happiness, and all this owing to one of the most despised departments of Christian work. It would be easy to multiply instances of blessing. But one and all would go to show that God Himself is the supreme factor in all service for God. It must needs be so. Unspiritual religious work is spiritless indeed. Christless Christian work is a contradiction in terms. All true ministering must still proceed from "the minister of the Sanctuary." The inspiration of all endeavours to save men must come from the Saviour; and as the inspiration, so the form, the mould, the manner. It lives upon Christ. This is at once its great necessity and its great glory; it seeks

"Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end."

XI.

Christ and our Sins.

"Oh, trust thyself to Jesus
When tempted to transgress,
By hasty word, or angry look,
Or thought of bitterness.
Then is the hour for claiming
The Lord to fight for thee;
Then is the time for singing
'He doth deliver me.'
Oh, trust thyself to Jesus
When daily cares perplex,
When trifles seem a power to gain,
Thine inner soul to vex.
Then is the hour for grasping
His hand who walked the sea,
Then is the time for singing
'He makes it calm for me.'"

"I am oppressed; undertake for me."—ISAIAH xxxviii. 14.

WE often speak of the psalms of David, but we might speak of the psalms of Asaph, the psalms of Ezra, and the psalms of Isaiah. How sweet they are! That of the twelfth chapter—praise for restoration; that of the twenty-sixth chapter—praise for rest; and those less

evidently psalms, like the twenty-fifth chapter and part of the sixty-third. This of the thirty-eighth chapter is not Isaiah's psalm, though bound up with his writings, like the immortal ode of Moses with those of David. It is a royal psalm—the Psalm of the good King Hezekiah. To realise its reception by his contemporaries we might imagine the sort of interest that would attach to a poem by the Prince of Wales, had he, on his recovery from illness, poured forth his gratitude in song. This song, published on just such an occasion, was composed, we suspect, in part at least, during the illness that gave rise to its composition. So doleful a dirge could hardly have come from the harp strung for praise, or if it did, the singer puts himself back into the position of his previous peril. He was so sad at heart that he called all the birds of the air to join his wail—now the crane on the margin of the marsh, now the swallow piping his farewell before he took his flight, now the dove making the wood mournful by her cooing.

"Mine eyes fail," he says; but then he looks "upward," and adds, "O Lord, I am oppressed—undertake for me."

Hezekiah will not want many a follower, in courts and out of them, to take up the same cry. Would that they would carry it to the same Comforter! For indeed they might, if in the midst of *the oppressions of the enemy* they would only think of *the undertakings of God.*

The oppressions of the enemy. To count over the number of their names would be to read the roll-call of the whole army of the aliens. Their name is legion. There are the oppressions of the flesh and the oppressions of the spirit, the oppressions of failure and even the oppressions of success, the oppressions of health, or rather

of ill-health, and the oppressions of a mind diseased, and also of a man made conscious of the plague of his own heart. I see one oppressed because he has too much to do, another oppressed because he has too much to bear, a third oppressed because the burden of souls is upon him, and he can hardly endure to look his fellows in the face, when he thinks that their next meeting may be before the Great White Throne; while another is oppressed perhaps more than all with the weight of his personal salvation, as yet unattained or unassured, and yet another by the assaults of the sin that doth so easily beset him, and by the burden of the weights, everyone of which he believes himself (and rightly) bound to lay aside, that he may run the race that is set before him.

This last case I confess seems to me the saddest. The case of one burdened and over-burdened by failure, till he has got into a helpless, hopeless feeling that, having battled with sins so often and so vainly, having tried this and attempted that, having prayed about them, wept about them again and again, he can hope to make headway against them no longer, but must give in to the conviction that defeat is to be accepted as inevitable.

Sometimes the oppression comes from a great sin and sometimes from a small sin, but it is equally fatal to be torn by a leopard or stung by a tzetze fly, and almost more provoking to find that in so small a matter our efforts are so unavailing. The old question about a pound of lead and a pound of feathers becomes very instructive here, the latter is just as heavy as the former, and, moreover, the soul may be stifled as well as burdened by its weight.

In the case under consideration the tempted one is

evidently depressed within as well as oppressed without, indeed no amount of external temptation impinging upon him would ring from him such a sigh, nothing but the sinking of the spirit when the iron enters into the soul can make such language appropriate. Yet there is some hope about the soul that thus cries out in his agony after all. For the *prayer is the prayer of a man at his wits' end*, i.e., *at the end of self*, and that, as you know, is the beginning of salvation.

Oppressed by the *weight of his affairs*, he cries to God, "*Manage* them for me, intervene, interfere on my behalf, give me suggestions; I need them, I have none of my own. Such a multiplicity of details disquiets me, such a multiplicity of duties distracts me, and in my distraction and distress I turn to Thee."

Oppressed by the *weapons of his enemies*, he cries to God, "*Meet* them for me, throw over me a shield vast enough, strong enough, to afford availing protection between my head and their arrows. I can show fight no more. 'My enemy is too strong for me.' Rid me of him. My work is beyond my strength. Do it, Lord, do it Thyself, or I am for ever undone."

Have you got to that? Have you got to the end of self—the very end—not merely to feel yourself weak, but to feel yourself "nothing?" That is Paul's word, and Christ's word too. There is a difference between these two states of mind. You know what it is in your earthly business to feel overcharged with care, and over-wrought with work, and to say, "I cannot go on any longer. I cannot do any more." But in spite of the feeling, in spite of the protesting, you *do* go on, though with a heavy heart; you continue to drag one limb after the other, and as if glued

to the desk, still hold your pen, and give your orders—till at last you find there must be an end, a real end this time, to your efforts; the room begins to swim around you, and the figures to fade from before you; so, with a heavy heart, reluctant to the last, you push aside your papers, shake off your spectacles, say to your clerks, "Get me a cab—I am ill," and you drive off, and leave the work to others. Now which of these states are you in spiritually? You have long since felt yourself to be weak, have you ever felt yourself to be nothing? I do not mean that you have lost individuality, or have shifted responsibility, any more than as the master in the case supposed. There is no shirking of personal duty, but there is a transfer of work to others, with the confidence that they will do it, and such transfer, such confidence, should there be in this case; for *the prayer is the prayer of a man who believes he has a friend in his God*, a sympathetic and a competent Friend—One who has love enough to take infinite pains with him, and skill and strength enough to perform miracles of mercy for him. I do not question his ability, you say; but is He willing to incur the care, and to be at the trouble that all this involves? Why of course He is, how can you ask such a question? Whom do you take Jesus for? I have seen a woman in Italy staggering along under a great load and a glaring sun, while perhaps her husband is sauntering along beside her with a jaunty air and empty hands, enough to make every honest heart ache to think not only how much she must bear, but bear from one who promised at God's high altar to care for her for life. Now, beloved in the Lord, I want to ask you whether that is the sort of person you picture the Bridegroom of your soul to be? Can the love of Jesus, think

you, ever come to that? Yet, surely, when you walk along oppressed and depressed with your burden, it is that you forget who is walking beside you, ready to carry for you the moment you say, "Undertake for me." I hope we may get to the end of that idea at last, and renounce, once and for ever, all notion of either inability, or disinclination on the part of the Lord Jesus, to undertake all things needful for us.

"Undertake." The word is a striking and expressive one, and even more so in the Hebrew than in the English. "Ease me," the margin has it, just as you might ask your guide to do when your knapsack presses too heavily upon you. How well I remember one who had protested that he was strong enough to carry it himself, after staggering along under its weight the first day, entreating the guide —who had felt himself aggrieved in the matter—to help him with it sometimes, and next day bargaining to be released from it altogether. Our circumstances are very similar. We all have to go through the world, and it is a sad world for us all, full of toil, full of temptation. We all start with the knapsack, and all soon get to feel we should rather not have it to carry, but only some of us find that there is One walking beside us—One whom we have not treated very well, who is both willing and able to unbuckle the straps and ease our shoulder of the burden. The idea is thus an idea of transfer, not indeed as to responsibility for your conduct, but as to the charge of providing the means whereby that conduct shall be worthy of a Christian, and worthy of Christ, not as to outward action, but as to the inward strength to carry it on. A real transfer of the care of the campaign; of anxiety about battling with foes, seeing that Jesus, once for all, may

be asked to manage our affairs, and to meet our adversaries; or, recurring to our illustration, we all must go through the world, and walk every step of the way (in one sense), but no one of us need carry his own luggage: and if I were you I would not carry it a step further, but turn to my Guide and say, "Ease me." That is my position. That is the meaning of the word "undertake." Nay, it means even more.

It means *become surety for me.* It is used thus in Psalm cxix. 122—"Be surety for Thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me." We think much about Christ as our Surety in *His* death; let us think more about Christ as our Surety in *our* life. He is as willing to be the one as the other, and is prepared in His infinite condescension *to give pledges* for both at any moment.

In this sense also the word is used, and used even in this very prophecy. In chapter xxxvi. 8, Rabshakeh says, "Give pledges to my master the king;" and so our gracious God is willing to be all and to bear all for us, to give all pledges to us, and our loving Saviour has become the Surety, the Hostage, the Pledge, for the accomplishment of all the Divine undertakings. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. i. 20). But *what are the Divine undertakings?* There are the undertakings of the Father. His undertakings to be a Father* is, in itself, a gracious and glorious one. And what a Father He will be! What will a father do for his children? What will he not do and be if he be worthy of the name? He will work for them, and watch them, feed them, clothe them, care for them, comfort them; and all this, and

* Jer. xxxi. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 18.

more than all, will the *Great* Father be to us, His *little* children.

There is His undertaking to be a King; and what a King He will be! All that the ideal monarch of heroic type could attempt, He will achieve.

And as if this, too, were not enough, there is another undertaking more comprehensive than either: "I will be their God."* All *lacunæ* are filled up by this. "He puts His name to a blank," and leaves us in every emergency to enter the amount.

There are the undertakings of the Son, the undertakings of the cross to cleanse us from all sin, and robe us with all righteousness—the undertakings of the throne, to be with us alway, to make His grace sufficient for us. He is our Judah, and becoming our Surety, says to the Father, "If I bring him not unto Thee, and set him before Thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." He is our Joseph, and provides for us the bread of life; our David, and takes heed that His sheep shall never want.

There are the undertakings of the Holy Ghost, to create in us a clean heart, to make us His temple, to help our infirmities, to help us to pray; in a word, "to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure."

With such undertakings of the Triune God, may we not say in a personal as well as a public sense—

> "All the promises do travail
> With a glorious day of grace?"

And the promises are being fulfilled. A calm, mature Christian stated in answer to a question from us the other day, that, though sensible of much imperfection, he had

* Zech. viii. 8; Heb. viii. 10.

never brought any habit of sin to God, confessing it as an iniquity, but God had rid him of it. "There is vanity, for instance," he said (of this we had been speaking), "I may own to that, for we are all born with vanity in us: I have humbled myself before God when lifted up. I have thanked God when my pride has been pulled down, and it would be ungrateful to forget that God has undertaken for me as the matter required."

A Christian lady of ripe judgment has told us how, at her conversion, while there were many things she set herself to conquer, believing she could, there was one form of worldliness so alluring to her that she did not feel she had strength to renounce it. "I will give it up to Thee," she said to God, "but I cannot get the mastery over it; rid me of mine adversary." And He did, and this so wonderfully, that not only the sin ceased, but the temptation to it ceased also; while strangely enough (yet it was not strange, was it?) the faults she had undertaken to deal with herself returned again and again upon her.

Sit down, then, some quiet hour, in the "time to keep silence," at the communion service, or during the enforced leisure of a railway journey, and think over your oppressions. *Make a list* of "every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset" you; procrastination, anticipation, exaggeration, discontent, discourtesy, meanness, slothfulness, prayerlessness, neglect of the Bible, and neglect of opportunities, or whatever else of evil doth encompass you.

Confess them severally and separately before your great High Priest. Be faithful with Him about them, telling Him all. Humble yourself on account of them, owning these things as iniquities, not mere infirmities.

Next, *Hand them over* to God to deal with. Let the transfer of the habit to His charge be as absolute as the transfer of the guilt to His atonement. Make them over to Him, bad property as they are His grace will accept them), to deal with in your behalf.

Then having done this, *trust God to do all the rest*, not, of course, without you, but with you and through you. Trust Him, I say, and do not be anxious about them any longer. Do not go on, either making too little of them as idiosyncrasies, or making too much of them as victorious sins. Just believe that God has your cause in hand, and will perform it; that He will not give it up, that He will not give *you* up (bruised reed and smoking flax though you be) till He bring forth judgment unto victory. Yes, trust Him, and say, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

And—one thing more—having given up a sin to God, *never take it back again*, neither take it back into your heart to consent to commit it, nor take it back to your hands to try to conquer it. "Remember Lot's wife," and let there be no backward lookings. Never resume the control renounced. The thing is God's now, let Him "do as He will with His own." "I will, I will," you say. "There shall be, God helping me, no harking back, no hankering after forbidden fruit. 'The idols' let Him 'utterly abolish.'"

I believe you are all sincere. I believe you mean this. But have a care lest, though incapable of returning like the dog to his own vomit again, you be found returning to the attempt to break of the simple practice yourself. Never resume the control or again attempt the conquest.

"The battle is the Lord's." Of course it must be fought out in the field of your heart, and with the consent of your will. But God and not you is the combatant. You are the weapon—only that—in His hand. "Yield ye your members as instruments" (arms or weapons, the margin rightly has it) "unto God." Let Him deal with the matter, and, trust me, He will prevail.

XII.

Christ and Small Sins.

"Many a Christian asks, What am I to do with my everyday sins You have no sins but everyday sins; and if you do not see that they are 'the body of sin' that was put in the day of God's fierce anger upon the cross, you have never yet known what death is, in the first Adam, and what life is in the second Adam. Do you not see that *all* your sins were *future* to God, which He condemned eighteen hundred years ago? Knowing this, you have a power, by the Spirit, not to touch, to taste, to handle that which cost the Son of God His life. You are crucified with Him."—J. DENHAM SMITH.

HOW is it we are so often conquered by small sins? "I can master the larger sins," I can even fancy one saying, "but the little sins *master me;* I can meet the great Numidian lion in the way, can meet him, and in the strength of the Lord can conquer him too; but the mosquitoes conquer *me.*"

Even after we have tasted the grapes of Eschol, and entered Canaan, and eaten the old corn of the land; even in the blessed life the blemishes still trouble our hearts and tarnish our character. The decisive conflict may be over; the walls of Jericho may have fallen, but a guerilla warfare is still maintained.

The land of promise is not altogether—witness both type and experience—a land of peace. How is it, I

repeat, that we are so often conquered by small sins? For the same two reasons as the children of Israel were conquered by the citizens of Ai; and for a third which, though not stated in the *history*, must have been present to the mind of the historian, for it grows out of the other two. "The same *two* reasons?" you say; "I thought there was only one, only Achan." Nay, if you look, you will see that there was another, not so *grave*, not so *great*, but a previous reason, and an important one too, and that was (I remember Mr. Haslem pointing it out at Mildmay) *because Ai was a little city.* The population was but twelve thousand; perhaps the Israelites did not know it was so many as that, and so they said, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither, for they are but few.

So they made too little of Ai and too much of themselves. Flushed with the victory of Jericho, they fancied all enemies must fall before them. But they learnt a bitter lesson when "the men of Ai smote of them about thirty-six men: for they chased them from before the gates even into Shebarim, and smote them in the going down; wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water." That this over-estimate of their own power, and under-estimate of the power of their enemies, had to do with it is shown by Joshua viii. 1, 2—"The Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take *all* the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into thy hand the King of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land."

So small sins, like small cities, conquer us *just because they are small.* If they were great we should be roused

to bring all our powers to bear upon them, or rather to see our powers to be no power at all, and so should seek to bring the power of God to bear upon them. If they were grave offences, great scandals, such things as would make Church membership a disgrace, and our being in Christ a very doubtful thing, then, in the name of the Lord, we should destroy them. But because they are small we think they *may*—perhaps *must*—be tolerated. They are just what is to be expected of all—they are common to man. Call them infirmities rather than iniquities. Do not trouble yourself too much about them; above all, do not trouble your God about them. They are beneath His notice, almost beneath yours. This is the very way to perpetuate evils; such an atmosphere is to them like the heat to the locusts (Nahum iii. 17): "The grasshoppers which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun riseth they flee away." Once persuade yourself that they are *inevitable*, and your conquest over them is hopeless; or regard them as unimportant, and you will find them most important; or, again, fancy you can slay them by putting forth a little power, and you will find that, small as they are, they have power enough to stab or smother you. For *consider what small sins are.* Perhaps we might say—paradoxical as it would seem—that in one aspect they are a greater indication of the corruption of the human heart, as showing that we cannot do even little things without omissions and flaws that give pain to God. In any case, *they are sins* after all. They are not mere infirmities, sad but not sinful. You tempers, dispositions, habits—you are either *right or wrong*, and I cannot look God in the face and doubt which. You are either *weaknesses* or *wickednesses;* if the former, I may ask God

to *pity* me, and cease to ask Him to *pardon* me. But I cannot in honesty do that. I do not deserve pity. I do need pardon. Yes, for the future I will write them down *sins*.

Consider *what small sins do*. How often they worry you, to say the least of it. How they wear you. How they hinder you, like the briar of the hedge, or the braid of the mantle. How they swarm about you, get into your eyes, that you cannot see God for them; get into your ears, that you cannot hear God for them; get into your skin, and you can hardly get them out again; into your flesh, and leave their stings there. Small, do you call them? They are *not* small in their effects; they are *not* small in the sense of being slight.

Consider *what small sins caused*, and still cause, God to suffer. They pained Christ. They wounded Christ. They slew Christ, and crucified Him, these small sins! He died as much from the avalanche of dust as from the hail of stone.

They grieve the Holy Spirit. "The heavenly dove is very tender, and feels every thorn."

They rob God. You belong to Him soul and body, and they keep you from Him, partly or entirely.

They obscure the sun. They hinder your soaring towards it. They impede your progress, as a thread may keep a balloon still cleaving to the dust. It is of the first consequence that you should feel the *guilt* of them. There is no hope without humbling. There is no hope without abasement in the dust as having sinned, having done very foolishly, very wickedly; having hindered the purpose of God, and the progress of His kingdom.

You must feel the weight of them. I do not mean in

the sense in which Jesus felt it; but you must recognise their importance, their difficulty. They will fight for bare life, these sins; they have wonderful underground growth, these thorns. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" I fear you have not yet said, "My sin is ever before me."

But many of you have. You are led by them to much prayer before God, to much self-humiliation before God, just as failure led Joshua. And here was an astonishing thing; God did not seem to want Joshua's prayers, to like Joshua's tears. The very thing that you would have thought God would have encouraged, He discouraged, and cried, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" The fact was, it was not prayer that could cure the mischief. It was not weeping that could recover the defeat. It was repentance, and so it is still.

Again, small sins, like small cities, conquer us *because we are sinning.*

"'Sins conquer us because we are sinning.' Why, to be conquered *is* to be sinning, is it not?" I do not mean that, of course. That is self-evident; that is mere tautology. I mean that over and above the sin now in question, we are sinning about some other thing, or else about this thing in some other way; in a word, there *is an Achan* in the camp, and therefore Ai cannot be conquered.

You remember the awful story—but have you learnt the awful lesson? You remember Achan's sin and Achan's doom, but do you know your own, and have you doomed it? If at this hour you are weak, you are worsted, you are flying ignominiously before the enemy, you are failing in matter after matter of duty,—search and see whether

there is not a cause. Often and often it has had to be said, "There is sin in the camp." The sin is sometimes quite a different sin, stubbornness about which hinders assistance from God. I can easily imagine a person fretting about his *fretfulness*, and his saying so, and longing to scatter seeds of kindness, to shed rays of *sunshine*, and yet he cannot get rid of this spirit of fretting. Why? One reason (the first out of three I am giving you) may be because he has a love for taking his ease in Zion, and for settling himself down to please himself instead of pleasing God. He will not give up the self-indulgence, and so he does not get the serenity. Another has tried, and is longing to be patient—really longing; but probe the impatience a little, and underneath you may find *pride*. "Poor and proud," he says; and proud he will be. Well, God seems to say, "Be it so; but you cannot be proud and patient at the same time." Another, wishing to be *amiable*, asks, "Why cannot I be so kind as so-and-so?" Another wishing to be prayerful, "And why cannot I be as devout!" Perhaps because you want to be worldly.

You can multiply such cases at pleasure, but please do not do that; take one, and let it be your own. Sit down quietly, and see whether there is not some other sin that hinders the conquest of this sin.

Sometimes there is an evident connection between the first sin and the others; as, for instance, over-occupation and prayerlessness; much novel-reading and little Bible-reading. But sometimes there is none, only the soul is stubborn; and so God is slow to hear, and slow to help.

Sometimes the sin is about this evil thing itself, or rather, about its surroundings. The person is willing to

get rid of it, but not willing strongly, honestly, on the whole, to incur the pain or privation that riddance brings. As a man *wanting to be spiritually minded*, but not willing to give up making haste to be rich; or a woman *wanting the mind of Christ*, but not willing to give up shining in society, and perhaps that somewhat worldly society too. You want to have the sleep, the sweet deep sleep of a labouring man; well, you must *be* a labouring man. You crave the keen joy of a climber; then you must climb: the greater joy of a Christian; then to you to live must be Christ: the joy of the Lord for your strength; then you must rejoice *in the Lord* always.

I was asked, "Can a man of business do all to the glory of God?" Can a man, any man, do all that God commands him (and "His commandments are not grievous")? Can any man, Englishman or other, do his *duty;* for God's glory is no more than God commands, and God commands no more than our duty?

He can, if he is content to make only as much money as God wants him to make. It is just here that there is a place for *heroes;* but are there any heroes for the place? Just here that there is a place for *martyrs;* but where are the martyrs to be found?

Some Christians will go into the fire for conscience sake; with others, it is conscience that goes into the fire for the Christian's sake. Which are you going to do? Which are you going to be?

God's lines all run straight. We, like silly children, say, "Please, God, let me go a little to the right, or a wee bit to the left;" but He says, "It cannot be; you must set them down as straight as Mine."

The evils, both first and second, would have been

averted, if Israel had asked guidance from God. Do you ask guidance on your knees, ask grace to make you sensible of the sinfulness of your so-called small sins, and then willingness to surrender *all* sin, and very soon will you have to rise, saying, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." But not till you do one thing more: *for small sins like small cities are not taken because we do not take them to God*, or if we do, *we do not trust them to Him.* No army with an Achan in it could trust; no heart with sin in it can trust. But apart from that, many do not. They try to fight their own battles, or, at best, they try to get God to come and help them. It is a great thing when we come to see that the battle is the Lord's, that is, to say, It is the Lord's battle. He is fighting, and all we have to do is to take sides,—God's side, of course; and then, having taken sides, to trust, to feel sure that God is going to conquer. Reckon that you *are* delivered, and God will make your reckoning a reality: your judicial standing an experimental salvation. Put the matter into God's hands, and leave it there. Do not be always plucking up the flowers to see if they are growing—the Gardener has them in hand; or going to the bank, to look at your desposit—the Banker has it in charge.

"Carefulness about sanctification will defeat itself," says the Rev. W. James. Confidence in the Author of sanctification honours God, and "them that honour Me, I will honour." Have we come to the point of self-despair? Do we want to pray the prayer of the publican? Are we the "worm Jacob?" You run into the mistake of the secular press which satirized Mr. Moody for so incongruous an illustration. "They did greatly err, not knowing the

Scriptures nor the power of God." It was the Prophet, not Mr. Moody, that said it, and *it was true.* The worm Jacob can, and nothing else can. Pass into the chrysalis and you cannot, into the butterfly and you cannot; but remain poor and weak, and you can. "Do not be disappointed if you continue to be tempted, and even if sometimes to fall into sin. What else did you expect? What else could you expect? This is to show you that you are nothing—no better; that you still need to pray for everything, to go unto God, and be beholden to Him for all; so, being nothing, trust, trust, trust right through."

But *does it work?* does the trusting the thing to God lead to the desired result? It does, if we yield ourselves unto God about it. God touches a spring, and if one does not respond, there will be failure; if one does, there will be deliverance. I often find when I have failed in sins sorrowed over and yielded up to God, that He has touched the spring, but I have not responded. On looking back I can see that I ought to have done so-and-so at the moment, and what is more, I knew that I ought: the suggestion came, but I did not attend to it, that is my difficulty, my disaster rather; and the remedy is instant yielding on every occasion to the slightest touch of the finger of God.

And here I am tempted to copy a racy note from an old favourite, de Quincey.

"Everybody knows," he says, "that Dr. Johnson was all his life reproaching himself for lying too long in bed. Always he was sinning (for he thought it a sin), always he was repenting, always he was vainly endeavouring to reform. But why vainly? Cannot a resolute man in six weeks bring himself to rise at any hour in the twenty-four? Certainly he can; but not without appropriate means.

Now the Doctor rose about eleven. This he fancied was shocking, he was determined to rise at eight. . . . To rise at eight instead of eleven, presupposes that a man go to bed at twelve instead of at three. Yet this recondite truth never to his dying day dawned on Dr. Johnson's mind. The conscientious man continued to offend, continued to repent, and at length died full of years without having once seen the sun rise, except in some Homeric description."

Only one or two things are wanting to make this instance quite in point, viz., that there did (*pace* de Quincey) dawn on Dr. Johnson's mind the conviction that he should retire early if he would rise early: that this conviction came to him again and again probably with the return of every night, that there came with it the comforts of indulgence with his friends or his books far into the small hours, and that it was these comforts that proved too strong for that conviction. In other words, Dr. Johnson *liked* to sit up late too well to listen to the curfew bell his conscience rung.

And just so it is with the silent man's temptation to moroseness, with the miserly man's temptation to meanness, with the gossip's temptation to scandal, and the grumbler's temptation to murmuring. I am persuaded that in each of them—at all events if the persons be children of God—come suggestions from the Heavenly Father. "Speak," "give," "hush!" "rejoice," say these heavenly voices, addressing each offender according to his offence. And if he be "not disobedient to the heavenly vision," his obedience will be his very salvation.

XIII.

Christ and our Sicknesses.

"Jesus had met this fainting spirit in the desert; He had raised this poor child from the earth, and taken him into His arms. Jesus was the first who ever loved him. Accordingly, how well Ulysses distinguished His voice from all others! It entered his inmost soul. Jesus was his Creator; Jesus was his Saviour. He died yesterday upon the cross in horrible suffering for him—him, a scoundrel, as he would cry out in his strong emotion. And this Jesus—victorious, sympathising—his Friend, would come and spend long hours at his side in his garret. He hardly dared to say anything, or said very little to other men but to Jesus! The others were compassionate, were kind, worthy people; Ulysses was not worth the pains they took about him; but Jesus! Jesus who had hungered, who had been cold; Jesus whom they had insulted throughout one dark night about Easter time; Jesus who had touched the leper with His own hand;—Jesus was his brother the same time that he was his God; he was quite at home with *Him*."
—Madame de Gasparin.

"I WAS sick, and ye visited Me," is the sweet word of the Saviour to those who go as ministering angels to watch or to visit those thus suffering. And when it is our turn to suffer, can we doubt that the Master mercifully reverses the sentence, and says, "You are sick, and I will visit you?" But he will do more. It is said of

Jesus—what sweeter thing could be said?—"*Himself took our sicknesses.*" It is said of God—what kinder thing could be said?—

"THOU WILT MAKE ALL HIS BED IN HIS SICKNESS." "Wilt so make it that there shall be no nodes in the bed," says one. "Wilt so make it as to turn it," says Matthew Henry, "so that no part shall be uneasy;" and he adds, "That bed needs be well made that God makes." "Make it all," says old Thomas Fuller—"bolster, pillow, mattress, head, foot, sides—*all* his bed, . . . and if you have no bed, He will make your having none (as he did for Jacob) to be a bed to you."

I suppose the words mean, that *God meets all the moods of the sick man;* and how many there are! One day he is so *bright* and hopeful—almost well he feels: and God is ready to rejoice with him that does rejoice. Perhaps he hardly thinks he needs Him that day; perhaps he even tries to do without Him. That is the reason why we have so few bright days—because we drive away the source of brightness from us. He allures us into the wilderness for this very thing, for communion with Himself; and now that He speaks comfortably unto us, shall we send Him away?

Another time he is *desponding*, well-nigh despairing: "One of my worst days," he says; "I am all *down* to-day." Then Jesus comes, if he will let Him, sits by the bed, takes his hand in His, and says, "My friend, you feel it hard to suffer, do you? I did. You feel very low to-day; I understand the feeling. You feel desolate, almost desperate: do you know that I was once in such darkness of soul that I was 'sorrowful unto death,' and in such despondency that I cried out—I, your Saviour,

I, God's Son—'Why hast Thou forsaken Me? I have not sent My angel, but come Myself—I, the Jesus of the cross, the Jesus of the forsaken. Will you not see Me and take comfort from Me too. I went down into the valley all dark, but My God brought Me up into the light; and He will bring you, for He is your God. Besides, I went down that you might not have to go: you have not other men's sins to atone for. 'No,' you say; 'but I have my own to bear.' Indeed you have not: I bore them in My own body on the tree for you, that you might not have to bear them. Believe they are gone, and look up."

Sometimes the sick man is *fretful*, murmuring against God. Well, at such times the Holy Spirit will come and whisper words like those of one tried beyond all mere mortal men: "Why should a living man complain?" or that of the great good Job: "Have we received good from the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" or that of Paul: "Neither murmur ye;" or that of Jesus Himself: "The disciple is not above his Master." And then the Spirit will take of Christ's sorrows—draw the mantle from the bleeding body, and show you the gaping wounds on the "altogether lovely, and absolutely sinless." The Spirit will take him out into the wilderness, and as he hears the wind sweep through the jungle where the beasts are, he looks round, and his eyes fall on Christ, and he is amazed at his own ingratitude. "What! my Master exposed thus, and I murmuring because not in a dell of peace!" Or when brought to the dark valley—His valley—he will say: "What effrontery of me to expect a bed of roses! But though this bed is not that, nor a bed of down either, *His* was harder and smaller—that is one

thing; and He *makes* mine—that is another. When I think of Him, I feel it a shame that I should ever murmur more."

Sometimes the sick man is in an *irritable* mood. People say this is a good sign. It may be for the body, but it is a very bad sign for the soul. When all things went well, were not you the one to say that there was infinite provision, infinite resource in Jesus, and to say almost harshly there was no excuse for impatience. Now is the time, my friend, to prove the truth of your own assertions, to show that there is a reality in what you said, that it is not words, words—nothing but words. "Ye have need of patience; and, "let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Now, when is patience to have her perfect work if not at such times? "Wait till I am better," you say; *i.e.*, wait till there is little temptation to be impatient: that is very likely! Now or never for this grace. Fretful and irritable, as if the world might stand still, and everybody wait on you! Sometimes one hears people say that the sick will allow none but so-and-so to do anything for them. This is selfish. Yes, just that; for "selfishness is the special temptation of the sick." You must watch against it, and pray against it, but, above all, you must open your heart and take Christ into it. No fear of impatience then.

I know not where to stop about the many moods of the sick, but I believe there is hardly one in which Jesus, though never sick Himself that we read of (such suffering would have been too immediately from the Father's hand, perhaps, for it to be allowed to touch Him), has not been; and not one, certainly, which Jesus cannot understand and meet, if only we will call Him in

to undertake for us. He will shorten the sickness and sweeten it. He will sustain the sick one, and support him under it.

But what He will *be* is more blessed than what He will *do*. And what will He be? We often speak of Jesus as the great Physician (and He is), and an amazing condescension is that; but here is condescension more amazing still: "*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*" *It proclaims God to be our attendant nurse.* Yes, there was nothing less than that—nothing less, but much more, as we shall see just now.

Only to think of it is almost enough to make one well, quite enough to make one content to be ill. God to come and stay with me, watch me, tend me, to sit beside my bed and *make* it. Was there ever such kindness, such condescension, ever such love and humility? Yes, there was once, nay, twice: when Jesus took the towel and girded Himself, and washed His disciples' feet; and still more, when God took our nature upon Him. Such words as these of David help us to understand the incarnation. But what does the promise amount to? It amounts to this: that the sick man may always have *society*, and that the best, for he may have the society of Jehovah Jesus. The friend comes and goes; the physician visits regularly, but at intervals: but the nurse is with the sick man morning, noon, and night, except, indeed, when withdrawn for a little needful sleep. But "He that keepeth" the believer "neither slumbers nor sleeps." "There is no night *there*." To Him there is no night anywhere.

"Thou art He who, never weary,
Watchest where Thy people be."

Think of this and say, "I am shut out from my

friends, it is true, but I have Jesus. I cannot go to my club, it is true; but I can go to Jesus. I am debarred intercourse with many, perhaps with any: they do not come; or, if they do come, the doctor will not let them see me. But Jesus, blessed Jesus, always comes; and, thank God, the doctor cannot keep away my Jesus."

The presence of the Saviour always brings *work*. One of the most irksome things, I am sure, is uselessness; to be a broken vessel, to feel I can do nothing for anybody, and, worse still, nobody wants me to do anything. Nay, sufferer, cheer up; somebody wants thee, therefore He has put thee there: thou canst do something, thou canst do much *for Him*. He wants thee for Himself, all for Himself. He saw there was no chance of getting thee while well, so He sent sickness to lame thee, that He might make sure of thee when thou shouldest be ill; and now that He has got thee, He says—"You have been working for others, you have been working for yourself, now work for your God." "It is mockery," you say, "after you have laid me here to tell me to work." Say not so. "This is the work of God to believe on Him whom He hath sent." Have you done that? Have you done it in the first sense of believing unto the saving of the soul; and in the second and sweetest sense of believing that all is well, and wise, and right, and kind? Have you? Then as to your work; well, what is a servant's work but just what his master sets him? And if merely set to lie on a mat, to be near the door, it is his duty to do that, and to see that it is well done. And your work, my friend (sick or well), is to do whatever God sets you at any particular moment. If He says to you, "Lie there and pray," you are to do *that;* "Lie there and sing," you

are to do *that;* "Lie there and show your relations, friends, servants, and all comers that you can simply look at Jesus," do *that*. "Whatsoever He sayeth unto you, do it." As Monod says, a soldier bidden to "stand" is not to run about all over the field. "Stand, therefore." It is work enough. Which preaches the best sermon, I wonder,—the busy minister, or the quiet mother?" Which sings the best psalm, I wonder,—the sweet-voiced chorister, or the patient sufferer? Which teaches the best lesson, I wonder, the skilful master, or the hospital patient, whose very face is a picture, and whose chastened suffering, and sanctified sorrow, are a wonder in the ward? What was the greatest work in the ministry of the greatest of men, who was more than man,—the greatest work in the world, the greatest work in the universe? Was it a work of toiling, or teaching, or healing? Was it not a work which in one sense was no work at all; a work not of doing, but of suffering; not of doing, but of dying? "And I"—the sufferer may say—"may share in that work; not for atonement (abhorred be the thought), but in some way I may 'fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ,' and by God's help so I will."

A sick man always has opportunity for *study*. Some of you are very busy with your business, as you call it—too busy—so busy that *your* business, that for which you were sent into the world, has been rarely begun. You were created surely to be something more than a sharp lawyer, or a clever surgeon, or a shrewd man of business. You were sent into the world to be a man of God, to live to Him and for Him. Have you done it? "No," you say, "I have not had time." Have you thought about it? "Well, no," you say, "I have not had time." Then

God gives you time. He sets an embargo on ordinary occupations. He puts you in quarantine. "Sickness," says Robertson, "is God saying to a man, Lie there and think."

Others *have* known something of duty, and have set about it; have known something of truth, and have set themselves to learn it. They have read and read again; but all this time Divine eyes have been reading them, and Divine lips have been saying—"This will not do; I was to be their best book, and they have not read *Me*. What do they know about Jesus? What do they know about God? I will give them time to think; I must make them to lie down, and while they do, I will go and watch by them, and wait upon them. While others are far, I shall be near; while other faces, once too familiar, get less familiar, they will get to know the face of the One who is always with them to nurse them; and mayhap they will get to love it too,—many a one has."

Ay, and it is only in this way that the best knowledge of God is to be gained. The man whose saying has been so often quoted*—"I know Jesus better than any earthly friend"—was a man who had seen affliction. Yes, even Christians have very much to learn of the character of Christ, and of the mind of God. The sick room is their study, and the features of Him who (more than Paul) is gentle among us, "as a nurse nourisheth her own children," is their lesson-book. Think of Moses, if brought up in ignorance of his parentage, in some hour of sickness, when the mother's heart was melting, and her love could keep the secret no longer, hearing for the first time that this kind, gentle, perhaps beautiful, certainly devoted,

* Hewitson.

creature was his mother. But what is that to finding a parent in your God, as many a sufferer has, and all sufferers might? This Being, so devoted, so gracious—the Being who gave me my life? It was very sweet to have His kind offices, infinitely tender to have His exquisite care; but to know that He is my own, my Father, and has come away to the fever-ward of this hospital in the far country to nurse me Himself—it is too good, too sweet, too delightful! Yet all this is even less than the relation of the Great Spirit to the souls of His children.

I am desirous that this subject should cast its shade—or its light rather—over your sick chamber whenever God lays you there: that you may say with all reverence, "I want to make the very most of this suffering. I shall not be content to show fortitude in the furnace, and to come out of it without the smell of fire having passed upon me. This sickness is my school, and I want to learn lessons here; my audience chamber, and I want to hear what the Lord God will say unto me." So used, illness may be an unspeakable blessing; yea, it may be our transfiguration.

XIV.

Christ and our Bereavements.

A wise man in abject want was eating some garden stuff, which he had picked up; and he said to himself, "Surely there is nothing in the world more poor and wretched than I am;" and he turned round and beheld another wise man eating the leaves that he had thrown away.

"Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest;
Round him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest:
And that cloud itself, which now before thee
Lies dark in view,
Shall with beams of light from the inner glory
Be stricken through."

"She goeth unto the grave, to weep there."—JOHN xi. 31.

THIS was the surmise of the Jews, you remember, concerning Mary; and you remember, also, that the surmise was incorrect. Mary was not going to the grave, she was going to Jesus. Mary was not going to weep, she was going to be comforted. Can any mourner do better than follow her steps—not the thoughts of her friends, but her steps as she turned to find Jesus? All mourners

would be comforted, all mourning removed, if only we had Jesus, or had *enough* of Jesus. Go to the grave if you will; go to the grave if you must; but be sure that much oftener, and much more closely and constantly, you go to Jesus;—to Jesus, who *sympathises* with you—to Jesus who *suffered* for you—to Jesus, who can *strengthen* you—to Jesus, who can *sanctify* your sorrow—to Jesus, who can *satisfy* your soul. Yes, turn right round. Take it all to Jesus, for He feels;

> "Tell it all to Jesus,
> For He knows."

But what is there in Jesus to meet the mourner's case? What is there not? In the character and work of Jesus, as we have even now set it down, is there not enough and to spare to sweeten every sorrow, and to chase away every grief?

In going to Jesus, you are going to a *sympathising Friend.* Mary found Him so. The heart of Jesus is a very well of compassion, and she came—like many a daughter of Israel—to the well to draw water, and with joy to draw it out of this well of salvation and sympathy; and if you come you shall find it the same, and you shall be comforted in the same way. Say not there is no sweetening of your sorrow in sympathy. When Abraham Lincoln was stricken down, was there no comfort, think you, in that widow-like, womanly letter that our Queen wrote to her that was so bitterly bereaved? Suppose you could see a shining seraph, and on his celestial eyelash could discover a shining tear-drop, would that be no solace? And when not a seraph but a Saviour, the King of kings and Lord of angels, draws near and says, "I,

even I, am He that comforteth you," is it no solace? Does it drive no tear-drop from your eyes? Surely there is in Jesus a sympathy which, did we know sufficiently its value, and trace it altogether to its depth, would allay every grief; for *Mary's Jesus is our Jesus*, and He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

But in the time of mourning who can comfort us like a mourner? And in coming to Jesus you are *not merely coming to one that feels with you, but to one that suffered for you;* you are coming to a heart that wept, to a heart that bled; and here, if you will believe it, you are better off than Mary. His unpierced hand was the cup of comfort that was given to her to drink of, but we are allowed to draw the draught of tenderness through the orifice that the sharp nail has made. "Thou hast" indeed "kept the good wine until now." It was sweet to drink of Thy tears, but sweeter still to drink of Thy blood. If we follow Him into His agony, if we know aught of the fulness of His sufferings, that will stay our own.

"But it is *not mere sympathy* that can comfort, *not even* the sympathy *of a sufferer*. What *I want* is *strength*," you say—"strength that may support me through the trial." Well, what you want you have. He reacheth down His strong arm, yea, both His strong arms, with the one to lift *you* up, with the other to raise *him* up; and, oh, what comfort is there in His lifting up, if we will but allow Him to hold us to His heart. Surely never wife was more devoted than the heroine of the "Memorials of a Quiet Life," and yet do you not remember that those days of her early widowhood were the days of the opening of the heavens unto her? A

mother, as devoted as any I ever knew, told me that the days when she had given to God her only child, were the days bright with the most amazing joy in the midst of sorrow. Yes, God's *holding up* is wonderful, when we will permit ourselves to be held up.

And what shall we say of His *raising up?* The grief of Jacob over Joseph is natural, almost beautiful, because he believed that Joseph was devoured, or destroyed, or dead; but if God had taken Jacob in vision into Egypt, and had shown him Joseph—comforted, exalted, eminently useful—then Jacob's grief, separated though he was from his son, would not have been beautiful, but blameful. Yet, mourning Christian, this is what Christ has done for you. He hath shown you your dead in His arms—they "sleep in Jesus:" shall we not rather say they *wake* in Jesus, according to His own words, "all *live* unto God;" and according to that word of Paul, "absent from the body, at home—so the Greek means—at home with the Lord." There they are, waking unto Him, and waiting for us. "Waiting for the manifestation," that is all; there *is* the mercy, there *is* the grace, there *is* the glory, there *is everything but* "*the manifestation* of the sons of God;" and when that shall come, then the hands shall push aside the warm mantle in which they had been enveloped, and thrust away the white coverlet under which they had been laid. Then shall the seed-corn that we have dropped in the lap of earth, sown in corruption be raised in incorruption, sown in weakness be raised in power, sown a mortal body be raised a spiritual body; and the glory of a new life will be given to it for ever.

"That is in the far future," perhaps you say, "but my

heart is hungering for comfort in the present, and it will starve if it goes on waiting, waiting for comfort until then." Nay, beloved, it need not starve, it need not be hungry for an hour; it may be satisfied, and satisfied now. But *in order that your souls may be satisfied your sorrow must be* SANCTIFIED. Now I do not want the commonplace—"I know it is for some wise purpose." I do not much believe in any commonplace, and the indefiniteness of the "purpose" causes the saying often to lose its point; but I want you to believe in *Him* from your heart, blessing the hand that strikes, yea, kissing the hand that holds the rod; to say, "It is well, it is all well." When we do not say that, it is because we do not believe in God, or only half believe in Him; because we are not thoroughly persuaded of His wisdom, or of His love, or of His power. We are to repose upon the everlasting care, and upon the everlasting will, and upon the all-loving heart, and we cannot repose there unless we believe in God, and believe also in Christ. Can you not think of Him, your Father; of Him, your Saviour; and, as you think of Him, persuade yourself, convince yourself, that all is well?

Do not leave the matter in doubt, or you may leave your soul in jeopardy; be fully persuaded, believe in God thoroughly, and accept the dispensations of His providence as the very best that can be for your eternal weal. And then look carefully for the purpose God has in His providence towards you. Look carefully for it. Every arrow is marked with some inscription. Have you read it? Every sword-blade that pierces you is a sword-blade that is graven. Have you read the engraving? The lesson God has to teach you by your bitter

lines of suffering—have you learnt it? Oh, find out what He means you to learn, and be a meek, obedient child, and commit the lesson to heart. Do not go out of the cloud without getting the lesson; you never can be the same man after the sorrow that you were before it. Remember that—but you may be a worse man instead of a better. Everything that is put into the fire is more or less affected by it. If you put in gold it is melted, but if you put in clay it is hardened; when you are tried may *you* come forth as *gold!*

"The sanctification of your sorrow;" Christ is the sanctification of your sorrow, for He "is made of God unto us sanctification," and He is sanctification in this aspect as truly as in any other. If you try to sanctify your sorrow yourself you are sure to fail; but let Him try, let Him touch it, let Him take it in hand. Yea, rather let Him take *you* in hand, and deal with you as He will, and then shall you be sanctified indeed. God would give you back your Isaac, but He cannot give him *back* till he has been given *up.* You must *accept* the affliction. You must receive it as from the Lord's love. You must take it from His hands, and take it trustfully, aye, and thankfully too, and so accepting it *Christ will sanctify your sorrow, and your sorrow will help to sanctify you.*

But there is one thing more that you want—one thing more that Jesus brings, that He gives you, the last and the best. What is it, I wonder? What can it be that He is still waiting to do? You recollect when the hearts of the disciples were breaking on that sad night of separation, when the Lord Jesus wanted to comfort them, and He sat down with them to eat their last meal together. He

wanted to give them something, and what did He give them? Did He take off some trinket, and give them this as a relic? Did He take off some of His raiment, and give them this instead of leaving it to the soldiers? Did He cut off some of the locks of His hair, and give them these to treasure up in their most sacred depository? Did He take the stylus, He who was only an oral teacher, and give them one written message? "He took bread, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, saying, Take, eat, this is My body," *i.e.*, He gave them *Himself*. He knew that they could be satisfied, as they could be saved, with nothing short of Himself. And it is Himself that *you*, mourners, most need, and what your Redeemer still giveth to you—not, I feel it, in the mere emblems (were it so, then all that eat would be satisfied): but in the spirit, the true and loving, living Jesus to come and live with us again, and love us still,—this is the gift, this is the comfort of comforts, this is the solace for me. Yes, there is in the companionship of Jesus all that is needed to console. It is a constant companionship; God never leaves us if we will. It is a thoughtful companionship, and He absolutely understands us, whether we will or not. It is a loving companionship, full of tenderness and fidelity beyond human friendship. Yes, the love of Jesus is the rest, and the refreshing, and the rejoicing, and the consolation, which can be our stay and our support when every other reed is bruised, and when every other staff is broken. A dear relative of mine—bitterly tried, bitterly bereaved—was walking in the darkness of the night, and of her sorrow, by a lonely road, when she seemed to hear a voice saying to her, "Am I not better unto thee than ten sons?" She paused, she

thought, she answered, "Yes, Lord." "And never, from that day to this," she writes me, "do I pass that spot without seeming to hear the same question, and feeling that I must give the same answer." He *is* better to us. He is our all-in-all.

Surely if Elkanah might speak of himself as more precious than children to the childless Hannah; and if Andromache could say—

> "No parent now remains my griefs to bear,
> No father's aid, no mother's tender care.
> * * * * *
> By the same arm my seven brave brothers fell;
> In one sad day beheld the gates of hell.
> * * * * *
> Yet while my Hector still survives, I see
> My father, mother, brethren, all, in thee:
> Alas! my parents, brothers, kindred, all
> Once more will perish, if my Hector fall:"

surely if poet and historian may thus represent human feeling, we may be content with the divine. Is it not comfort enough for thy widowed heart to know that "thy Maker is thy husband;" joy enough for thy spirit, bowed over the empty cradle and the vacant chair, to learn that He will give thee "a name better than of sons and daughters;" solace enough for your orphaned souls to feel that He "will not leave you orphans?" Can we bear to think of ourselves as saying, "I have nobody left but God;" or "I have to put up with Jesus?" Shall we not rather say, I see "no man, save Jesus only," but Jesus is enough? In the Holy Child I find my children; in the Holy Man I find my friends; in the Holy Lord "received up into glory" I find "the Head over all things" to me.

"Jesus hath satisfied."

Yea, He doth satisfy now; for in Him dwelleth every good thing. The Tree of Life beareth twelve manner of fruits, and "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Their healing virtue is chiefly shown, no doubt, in repairing the waste of life; but it is shown in calming and comforting the chastened soul, and leading it to find solace and supply in the strong love and tender mercy of our God.

Now these five particulars—and it would be easy to make them fifty—reveal to us something of Him who is "the consolation of Israel;" only this is needed, that we should, like Simeon, embrace that consolation. Let the mourner say, "If there be any consolation in Christ; if there be any comfort of love; if there be any heart of mercies," I am resolved to get this comfort, and to make it mine; and then having faith in God, God will have fidelity toward him, and as the sufferings of Christ abound in him, so will the solace of Christ abound too. But we must abandon ourselves to His comfort, we must allow Him to step in and do His work. We are afraid, sometimes, to "launch out into the deep;" is it any wonder, then, that we continue to be dashed against the shingle, and to be torn and lacerated in consequence? Oh, we must trust our God,—trust Him thoroughly, trust Him utterly, and then He will prove equal to His work, and equal to our weakness. Instead of stooping over a precipice, as you hang by some breaking bush to gather a faded flower, let go the bough, let go the flower, and—

> "Simply fall
> On His Almighty arms."

XV.

Christ and other Sorrows.

"The vessel must be shapen
For the joys of paradise;
The soul must have her training
For the service of the skies;
And if the great Refiner,
In furnaces of pain,
Would do His work more truly,
Count all His dealings gain.
For He Himself hath told thee
Of tribulation here;
Be still, and let Him mould thee
For the changeless glory *there*.

From vintages of sorrow
Are deepest joys distill'd;
And the cup outstretch'd for healing
Is oft at Marah fill'd;
God leads to joy through weeping,
To quietness thro' strife,
Through yielding unto conquest,
Through death to endless life;
Be still; He hath enroll'd thee
For the kingdom and the crown;
Be silent; let Him mould thee
Who calleth thee His own."

I WAS paying a visit of condolence to one bitterly bereaved. After varied conversation and consolation I

rose to go, and, finding that she was about to visit the grave, I said, "I will give you a text:" I gave her John xi. 31. Under this impulse the last chapter was written, bereavement having coloured my consideration of grief generally. And yet, if I were to write for other sufferers, might I not write in the same strain? Must I not send them also to Jesus? What better could I do than tell them too of His sympathy, of His strength, of His power to sanctify the sorrow and to satisfy the soul? Yes, sufferer, whoever thou art, what thou wantest is Jesus; and wherever thou art, Jesus is there. Thou needest Him as much who hast felt a living branch break under thee, as the mother whose grief is that the flower on her bough hath faded, and the branch must be carried away and hidden out of sight. A man needs Christ quite as sorely in a bankruptcy as at a burial; and he may have Him too. Yes, that faithful, unchangeable Friend is equal to every emergency; "In *all*"—ALL—"our affliction *He*" is "afflicted, and the angel of His presence saves us."

But let us think a little more in detail of disasters which make the lives of some dreary with a dreariness darker than death. Here the tongue of slander is busy, making many an injured one to say, "Reproach hath broken my heart." There a crushing commercial calamity is impending, and the perplexed one knows not how to meet it. Many a time a bereaved parent's heart echoes to the words, "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away"—away into the far country—and there "wasteth his substance in riotous living;" and while there—worst anguish, this, of all!—dies, and gives no sign.

In such cases as these it is almost a mockery to utter human words of consolation; better copy the one wise thing the friends of Job did, viz., when they sat "down with him seven days and seven nights, none speaking a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great." For to such a sufferer human comfort may be bitter, albeit human company is sweet. But if he cannot listen, cannot bear the palm of platitude laid upon him, he can speak—nay, speak he must—and ask, *Where am I; Who put me here;* and *What did he put me here for?*

When first he asks *where he is*, the anguished one is like to make bitter answer to himself, and to say, "I am left desolate in the world where all is dark; no more peace, no more prosperity, not a vestige of comfort, no ray of light anywhere; it is all dark." Nay, my friend, your eyes are blind with weeping; blind as Mary's were, and Jesus, all unknown, stood by her all the time: and so He stands by you; He is not dark, and God is not dark. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Heaven is not dark, "no night *there*." The "white stone with the new name written" is not dark. Though the earth be removed, the mountains upheaved, there are "things which cannot be shaken;" and let what will depart, they remain. Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace to hide us in the heart of God "till this tyranny be overpast." So some of the first missionaries to the South Seas, exiled, homeless, naked, hungry, set upon by a savage horde, yet could write from their hiding-place, a cave in a rock: "Though stripped of every worldly good, without so much as a garment to cover us, yet our heavenly inheritance remained inviolate and inviolable; though at a distance from friends, and

exposed to enemies on all sides, we might yet rejoice in the presence of our heavenly Father; and though life seemed more than ever uncertain and death impending, yet neither could separate us from the enjoyment, and the latter would but hasten to the closer embraces of His love."

But it is seldom indeed that we are without the good gifts of God, from which, as well as from His love, we may weave a garland of joy. "I am fallen," said Jeremy Taylor, during his dark days, "into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me. They have left me sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, many friends to pity me, and some to believe me; and I can still discourse, and, unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my hopes of heaven and my charity to them too. I can walk in my neighbours' pleasant fields, and see the variety of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in wisdom and virtue, in the whole creation, and in God Himself. And he that hath so many causes of joy is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, if he loses all these pleasures and chooses to sit down on his own little handful of thorns."

But this may grate on some ears. I know there are times when it is positively painful to remember, much more to be reminded of, the possibility of pleasure. I have known days when one could hardly bear to see a letter without a mourning border: this is natural, but to indulge it long is ungrateful. It is the spirit of Job, not

of Jesus. "Strengthened with all might," the eye should be enabled to take broad views of things, to survey the whole field, and not barely the part of it that is ploughed up. Dwell not on what is lost, but on what is left, and above all, on Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Or if the rebellious eye will turn its recreant glance away from the flowers, and gaze fixedly on the march or the thicket, let the heart ask itself, the while,—*Who put me here?* and the answer will surely yield "grace sufficient" to bear the sharpest "thorn" that ever pierced human "flesh." He hath put me here who put Christ on the cross, and who put my sin on Christ.

Joseph, that beautiful prototype of Christian virtues, takes the right view of sorrow when he says to his brethren, "It was not you which sent me hither, but God:" and in the same spirit David says, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because THOU didst it." Yes, David, thou wast right—right to be silent: "Why should a living man complain,"—complain against his God? But if these sufferers trusted God, how much more may we, whose God is Jehovah-Jesus, the God of Gethsemane and of Calvary, and because the God of all sorrows, the God of all comfort too! Have you ever thought how devoted to the work of consolation a being must be to be called after its name?—So Barnabas was called on earth; so Jehovah is called in heaven—the God of all comfort, of *all* comfort, not of *small* comfort, or even of *great* comfort, but of *all* comfort; not of comfort of one kind, but of all kinds—"The God of all comfort;"—using His very Godhead for this very thing, laying the wealth of worlds under contribution, and exerting His Divine power and majesty for this end—to be a Comforter to you. Will you

not let Him? And while others are breaking their hearts in bitterness against men or against circumstances, shall you not be found healing yours against the great heart of God? Yes, let Him be your Comforter. And what a Comforter He can be? "My Lord," wrote Rutherford from his prison, "makes me find that He will be a confined prisoner with me. He lieth down and riseth up with me; when I sigh, He sigheth: when I weep, He suffereth with me; and I confess, here is the blessed issue of my suffering already begun, that my heart is filled with hunger and desire to have Him glorified in my sufferings."

This is the answer the soul must give to the third question suggested above, *What has God put me here for?* He must have some purpose, for He is too wise ever to work without one, and it must be a merciful purpose, for "He is too good to be unkind."

> "Who took the guilt that bound me long,
> And laid it on His only Son,
> Can never do my soul a wrong."

He hath put me here for "*the trial of*" my "*faith*," to know whether I really trust *Him* or only the gifts that come from Him. He hath put me here *for the purifying of my life*, that He may "purely purge away" my dross and take away all "my tin." Is this like to be the effect of this fire of affliction upon me?

He hath put me here for the *inflaming of my love*, that, shut out from other delights, I may delight myself in Him, and be able to say with the saintly sufferer just quoted: "Welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet cross of Christ; welcome fair, fair, lovely, royal King, with Thine own cross; let us all three go to heaven together." And

again: "My blessing thrice every day upon the sweet cross of Christ. Love, love defieth reproaches. The love of Christ hath an armour of proof on it, and arrows will not draw blood of it."

He hath put me here that Christ may be magnified in my body. It was a sufferer's face that men saw, as it had been the face of an angel; and a sufferer's life should be more: men should see it as the life of the Saviour. A holy calm in the midst of a very gale of disquietude, a heavenly patience in the presence of a storm of enmity, will be a joy to God and a glory to Jesus. Even we Christians are apt to be selfish; seeking, getting, grasping something from God. Now is the time for giving out some of what we have received, and for showing that the life of Christ in us is a living power. So "you must learn to make evils your great good, and to spin comforts, peace, joy, communion with Christ out of your troubles, which are Christ's wooers sent to speak for Himself to you." Some time or other, and in some way or other, every sorrowing Christian will be brought to feel—

> "Amid my list of blessings infinite
> Stands this the foremost—that my heart has bled."

What such tried ones need is to be brought to complete confidence and to complete consecration. Nothing more than these familiar moods of mind; but these in their maturity.

We need *confidence* that Jesus, having loved His own, loves them unto the end; that "a bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench until He bring forth judgment unto victory;"* ("unto truth,"

* Matt. xii. 20.

Isaiah has it:* and where all is integrity truth is the only victory wanted). Well, God can give it, and in His own time He will. Let us not be impatient: "Our vindication is on high." "He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealings as the noonday." "I will not leave thee," is God's word to us, as to Jacob, "I will not leave thee till I have done that I have spoken to thee of."

Consecration here puts on the form of submission; when we gave up all to Christ we did not surely make our reputation, our fortune, or our friendships an exception. We surrendered all, and God has just come to see whether that surrender was sincere, and whether it is sustained. "*Blessed*," says St. Francis de Sales,—and the words deserve to be written in letters of gold,—"*Blessed are the hearts that bend, for they shall never break.*" It is because they do not bend soon enough, or low enough, that the marsh reeds become bruised; and if they further resist the wind, they will be not only bruised but broken. My brethren, resist not; resist not that wind which is sent to brace though it seems to pierce; sent to bear thee on thy way to heaven, though it seems—it is only seeming—scorching as it were almost a blast from hell. Remember that that wind is the will of thy God, and so, instead of resisting, do as they do with the sirocco—fall before it; yea, fall down and worship. It is worth worshipping; it is God Himself coming to thee, though it be under the disguise of sorrow. Worship it, nay, rejoice in it, for "He seeketh him that rejoiceth,"—that rejoiceth amid suffering, as a sufferer interpreted that text to me once. Oh, yes, He doth, and the meeting makes light the

* Isaiah xlii. 3.

heaviest heart, and bright the darkest hour. As a gardener, caring for all his plants, with special tenderness would bend over a breaking bough, and if from its wounds it flung forth flowers, would lift its tendrils with delight as well as with double care; or, as a mother, fond to all her children, redoubles her fondness where any suffering has invaded the child-circle: and if the little sufferer bears the sorrow bravely is fonder still, and fonder yet than all where the suffering so meekly met is chastening inflicted by her hand: so the "Father," who is "the Husbandman," and whose chastening and caressing are as near together as they are with "one whom his mother comforteth," goes forth with a lovingkindness even beyond that which He is wont to show, to meet, and to greet, and to gladden every child of His "that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." The cordials of Christ are kept for "them that are ready to perish;" the "new wine of the kingdom" for "him that is sad of heart." We shall never know God's dearest endearments till we have sorrow to bear, and till we bear it joyfully. Act upon that beatitude of de Sales, for it is profoundly true—"BLESSED ARE THE HEARTS THAT BEND, FOR THEY SHALL NEVER BREAK."

XVI.

Christ and our Joys.

"My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.
In darkest shades, if He appear
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's sweet Morning Star,
And He my rising Sun."

ISAAC WATTS.

"FRIEND Milton,"—you remember Ellwood's famous question and its famous answer—"Friend Milton, thou hast said much about Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say about Paradise found?" and (so to compare smallest things with greatest) might we be questioned concerning our little book. We have had much to say about cares and crosses, sins and sorrows, and surely it were ingratitude itself not to say something about our joys. For we *have* joys, joys as well as sorrows and conflicts for

"Our guerdon here;"

and when we have not *joys* we still have Jesus, and therefore may have *joy*,—a different and diviner thing—a para-

dox, but a possibility, for it was on "the same night that He was betrayed" that the Man of Sorrows said—

> "THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL." *

JESUS *wishes us joy.* Many another person may have wished it us in our time: our nurse when we were christened, our pastor when we were confirmed, our parents when we were married. It was much to have the wish from *them;* but it is more to have it from Jesus; much more, not only because He is dearer, but diviner; what He wishes may be, what He wills will be.

Jesus wishes us JOY, not salvation solely, nor even sanctification merely. He wants gladness superadded to goodness, and while longing beyond all things to see His children holy, He sets His heart upon having them happy too.

Jesus wishes us HIS *joy.* What a wonderful joy that must be! As His love is above all other love, and His trust ahead of all other trust, so I take it His joy must be superior to all other joy.

His joy: there is a joy which is not His, "neither is it any of His giving, nor of His sanctioning;—it is cursed with a curse a hundred times repeated. Let the eager contenders after this world's delights stay their hand a moment, and listen to what is said of it: 'The ease of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools destroy them;' 'and the harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine are in their feasts, but they regard not the operation of His hands.' 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire,

* John xv. 11.

that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have at my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.' These are earthly pleasures, then, and earthly joys, in which there is not only no conformity to the Divine will and character, but of which the enjoyment is sin and the end is death. This is the joy of them that are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,' of them that are 'choked with the pleasures of this life,' of them that believed not, but had 'pleasure in unrighteousness;' of them that not only do such things as are contrary to the judgment of God, but 'have pleasure in them that do them.' It would be vain to seek among these for the renewed image of our Lord. There was in Him not only no experience, but no capability of such enjoyment."

Yes, there is a joy which is not His, and we do not want that, but if there be a joy which *is* His, *that* we *do* want. But had He any? Was not the prophecy concerning Him that of "a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief?"—to say nothing of the tradition that "He was never seen to smile, but often known to weep." True, very true, at least the prophetic picture. And it is in the fact that Jesus was so sorrowful that much of the comfort lies; for if we can show that, in spite of His sorrows, He had His joys, then when our way is through the wilderness we may hope for a well-spring too.

We might adopt another argument—we might say with the writer just quoted: "Christ had a debt of suffering to pay which admitted of no temporal joy. Our case is very different: not only has our debt of misery been paid, but a large purchase of happiness has been made for us. Every temporal good is the purchase, or rather the repurchase,

from the forfeiture of the fall, given to us richly to enjoy, by Him who refused them for Himself; . . . and I cannot think that those who are in possession of much of this world's good, provided it has come to them in the order of Providence, without too much seeking of their own, and who are devoted to His service, have any reason to be uneasy because of this want of conformity to their Lord; neither to reproach themselves that they cull so many flowers where He gathered only thorns. He made Himself poor in joy, that we might be made rich in it. What wonder if He gives us more on earth than He enjoyed Himself."

But I almost prefer, specially for the sake of bleeding hearts (of which there are so many), to search and see whether Jesus had not Himself many joys; for indeed I think He had, and that while the thorns were so conspicuous, "the oil of gladness" was beneath them undiscovered. They strike every eye; but those who get close enough may see a hidden joy at heart which seldom failed Him. This was not only "the joy set before Him" which He has now, but a joy which He had while His couch was sackcloth and His robe was sable. It sometimes broke out in His lifetime on earth, as when He "rejoiced in spirit," and thanked God for the hiding and the revealing of His will; it often breaks out in the lives which were made to be likenesses of His own, and overflows in their songs and psalms. But it always burns with steady blaze—like the lamps never allowed to go out in the temple of the Lord—in such passages as those in which, in the Holy of holies of the gospels, our High-Priest Himself speaks of His joy. He does this twice over,* and in such a way as implies

* John xv. 2; xvii. 13.

that He had a joy—had it habitually abiding at the centre of His being, whatever might be on the surface; implying, too, that His Father knew, and His dearest friends knew also, that He was the possessor of this joy. Yes, Man of Sorrows, *Thou hadst no happiness on earth, but* even on earth *Thou hadst* "JOY."

Jesus not only wishes us joy, His joy, but that this joy "MIGHT BE FULL." Perhaps we may say this is the same wish over again, "for it pleased the Father that in Him should *all* fulness dwell." And if "all fulness," then fulness of joy amongst the rest. This is provable yet in another way, for in God's "presence is fulness of joy," and Christ was ever in the presence of God—save in the mysterious atoning hour, and then when He lost the presence He lost the joy. In any case His wish for us is *joy in fulness*, that is joy in flower—or as we call it, joyousness. They know little of Jesus who think of Him as other than desirous of our deepest delight. Exuberant spirits are not always possible, and they are not always desirable; the deepest river does not make the most noise, but "a joy unspeakable and full of glory" need never leave us.

If we are to have Christ's joy, we must go where He went to find it; and where was that? In God, in the will of God, and in the work of God. His lips say little of His joy in God, but His life says much. No one can peruse the gospels without feeling that joy in God was always with Jesus, so that of Him emphatically we can say, "The joy of the Lord" was His "strength."

He does tell us that it was His "meat and drink to do the *will* of His Father." And David tells us for Him that it was nothing short of "delight to do Thy *will*, O God."

The one occasion of His rejoicing mentioned in His memoirs* gives us the third source of His joy—the progress of the *work* of God. This was the travail of His soul, of which He saw and was satisfied.

"If He had any other pleasures"—and can we look upon the lilies gathered by His hand, listen to the little children again and again drawn to His knee, or enter the homes—like those of Bethany—dear to His heart and doubt it? Still "He does not tell us so." "Straitened" till the "baptism of blood wherewith He was baptised was "accomplished," possibly "He found no joys but those He brought with Him from heaven; certain it is He does not speak of any other." † Though we may fill the silence of Scripture with sweet voices, which we may imagine, and do imagine, solaced the ear of the Saviour, yet it is safer to copy Christ in the known than in the unknown, and it will be safer surely to draw our joy "from the wells of salvation" than from any other well. Let us look to it then that, as He was to Jesus, God is everything to us; that we delight also to do and to bear —for surely that is included—His will; and then that we let our hearts go out with His in a passionate yearning for the salvation of souls and for their sanctification. This was Paul's joy and John's, as well as the joy of Jesus; this is the joy of angels, and of the angels of God; plenty of scope here for the play of the affections, in the sanctities of which supreme joy loves to dwell!

Having spoken so far expositionally, and so laid for ourselves a Scriptural foundation, let us follow up the

* Luke x. 21.

† "Christ our Example," by Caroline Fry; from which the previous quotations also have been taken.

matter practically, and think of Jesus and our joys, yea, our very pleasures, as they come to us every day and hour. For they *do* come, and if our eyes are open we shall see them trooping in, in almost every position and almost every period of our lives.

To begin at the lowest rung of the ladder, we might mention—the Bible is not above doing so—*Jesus and our* PHYSICAL *joys.* The five gateways of knowledge, as our senses have been well named, are gates of gladness, or would be if only a lord on whose hand the King leans were made keeper of each gate. To "eat" our "meat with gladness" is permitted us; but that gladness is only permitted, only possible indeed, where there is "singleness of heart." This is a combination of ideas man would not have thought of; God has: He knows how much the healthy, and thus the happy exercise, even of the physical powers, depends on the right use of His gifts, and so He says by implication of eating—and the same may be said of every other appetite—that we must have the "single" eye for Him the while. All excesses are sure to be checked then.

Rising from physical to SOCIAL joys—pleasures *par excellence* as they are deemed—how needful is it here to keep Christ as the core of all; to pray,

> "Let not my heart within me burn
> Except in all I Thee discern."

Commenting on the words, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing" (1 Thess. ii. 19), one of our most incisive speakers* says, "Never have a hope that will not lead to a joy, nor a joy that will not lead to a

* Rev. James Vaughan.

crown." It is often said that we ought to go *nowhere that we cannot take Christ*, but surely for one in whom Christ dwells the rule should rather be, to go *nowhere that Christ does not take us.*

So much—for we cannot enlarge—for those tempted to seek too many pleasures; but what about those—for there are such—tempted to take too few, or at least to find their pleasure in their work or in their worship? It is quite possible to be selfish, spiritually selfish, in such matters; advanced Christians ought to show their advancement by being willing to deny themselves the highest joy for the sake of those only able to receive a lower; not that they ought to enter or allow "the pleasures of sin." But other pleasures, innocent though inferior, should be allowed for the sake of other persons, and perhaps for our own. Let us remember St. John and the bird, and not keep the bow-string always on the stretch. Forest trees should give freedom to the flowers to grow at their feet, and will be the fairer for the clasping and the clinging of their toy tendrils.

We rise a step higher when we speak of LITERARY joys. They are great, they are good, but they are not gracious unless we have "Christ in the midst of the doctors." There is a danger of thinking that everything readable ought to be read, without considering the time it may take, or the effect it may have on your mind, or heart, or habits. All this would be set right and kept right if we did but—I speak reverently—make Jesus our book-buyer and our librarian.

So too with the newspaper, the only literature some men read: a very good thing in its place, but a very bad thing when it pushes everything else on one side, and a very

pernicious thing when it fosters partizanship, kindles the war spirit, or goads people on to political passion; now all this would be checked were but the paper held in Christ's hands. So with magazines. In this age of "Monthlies," it is so hard to select, people say. Well, suppose we leave the selection to Christ.

We come to a deeper delight when we speak of HOME joys. There are the joys of *bridal*, they ought to be, and they are joyous indeed; but even where twin souls have found each other they need God to "sanctify and join" them "together in marriage." If any one thinks of wedded life, without this blessing, as a paradise, he will soon find it paradise lost; but there is a "Tree of life in the midst of the garden," and if he "take and eat and live for ever," his joy may live with him.

There are the joys of *parentage*. A doting father and a devoted mother placed on the grave of a dear child this inscription, "The centre of home joys for —— years." Now only Christ can be that. We know, of course, what may be meant by such an epitaph, and very beautiful it is so far as it is deserved; but really to place any created beings on such a pedestal is to put them in a position that may be ruinous to them, and must be precarious to you. Love your children wisely, and then only will you love them well: be able to say of each as Madame Guyon said of a dear friend whom heaven had claimed, "I always loved her in God and for God."

For the sake of the young let me speak of Jesus and SCHOOL joys, for surely school has its joys. One of the happiest days of my life was the day I went to my first school, and another the day I went to my first boarding school. It would be a great thing towards the making

and keeping these pleasures if every Christian pupil would remember that he has, beside the masters he sees, Jesus Christ for his teacher; if every Christian teacher would recollect the text that tells us, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me;" and if in the playground the Holy Child Jesus were looked for, wished for, and welcomed.

May I speak of BUSINESS joys? Why should I not? I am sure there are such. I am sure they are more numerous and more important than many that are more commonly spoken of as such. Business successes are joys; its speculations are joys; its activities are joys. No doubt business has its sorrows, neither few nor small; but let us be just to it, let us be just to the God who gives it to be the life-work of so many, and own that it also has its joys. How much more joyous they would be, how much freer from earth and farther from care, if the duffel grey were interwoven with the fine gold of the kingdom, and if athwart the common cloud were cast the bright iris of God's own bow.

The joys of NATURE should, like the rest, be taken to Jesus, that on their fair young brow He may sprinkle the holy healing waters of His best blessing; that all the balm they bring may be laden with the gifts of Gilead; that all the sweets they exhale may waft a fragrance fresh from the garden of the Lord; that the woods may be felt to be full of "trees of His planting;" that the mountains on which we gaze may greet us with echoes of His voice; and the grass on which we tread may be "wet with the dew of heaven from above:" in a word, that the Lord God may still "walk in the garden in the cool of the day." And He does; "while we speak He's

near." "Hath not" His "Hand made all these things?" Are they not all full of Him that "filleth all in all?" No man should be so susceptible of "the sweet influences of the Pleiades," and of universal nature, as the Christian.

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green!
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen.
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His and He is mine." *

We need Jesus in Nature then, if Nature is to unfold to us all her charms; with Him by our side let us enjoy them to the full; but after all we shall have to own that "fulness of joy" is not in nature. "I asked the earth of God, and it answered, '*I am not He.*' I asked the sea, and the deeps, and the living and creeping things, and they replied, '*We are not God.*' I asked the moving air, but the whole air with its inhabitants answered, 'Anaximenes was deceived: *we are not God.*' I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and they gave the same answer; but they added in the silent voice of their moving and beautiful forms, 'GOD MADE US.' O Beauty of ancient days, ancient but ever new! Too late I sought Thee, too late I found Thee. I sought Thee at a distance, and did not know that Thou wast near. I sought Thee abroad in Thy works, and behold Thou wast within me."†

* Wade Robinson.

† St. Augustine's Confession, as quoted in Upham's "Life of Faith," p. 277.

What shall I say of the joys of GRACE? These, surely, all will allow ought to be joys of Jesus. But are they? There are many people who have a distinct and intense pleasure in Christian work. The progress of the Gospel interests them beyond all things. They are ready to spend money and toil and trouble upon it, and yet on some it has at times almost, if not quite, a bad effect. They show signs of selfishness: selfishness about good things indeed, but still selfishness; which often survives for sect or party or congregation long after it has become extinct for self and even for family. This breeds bigotry, unhallowed rivalry, and other conspicuous faults, which divide different churches, and even divide different congregations of the same church. Now what is the cure for all this? The cure is Christ: bring Him to the front and keep Him there; bring Him into your church life, and consult and crown Him in all your church success, and He will tone and temper all. Bigotry will faint beneath His warm breath, sect-selfishness will melt away under His sensitive touch, and all things be one where there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all; above all, and through all, and in you all."

When I named the joys of grace, however, you thought, doubtless, not of joy ecclesiastical, but of joy religious and divine—the joy of communion, the joy of prayer and the sweeter joy of praise, the joy of the Presence, the joy of the Lord. May we know much of it, have much of it! It is this "joy" that is indeed our "strength." But even in this best blessing there is a danger, the danger of building upon joy instead of building upon Jesus; of making a god of our joy instead of a joy of our God. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," not only

from the clumsy, cloven logs that delight degraded minds, but from the carved and costly images, overlaid with gold, yea, with much fine gold. Do not worship your worship; never give the peace of God the place of God, or allow His joy to dethrone your Jesus.

I wanted to say a word of the joys of SORROW, for "great is the mystery of sorrow, and its greatest mystery is its joy."* Confess it to yourself, sufferer, that sorrow has its joy; often of release from care, often of communion with God. But we need Jesus in this joy, or it will soon make to itself wings and fly away, and the sorrow enlightened will drive us to self and selfishness—the sick man's snare.

The word reminds me of one more joy, the last of earthly joys, and perhaps the highest—the joy of TEMPTATION. "What!" you say, "can there be any?" It seems there can, for God says—"Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." I am afraid it is a joy most of us know nothing about; it needs to *worship the* sweet *will* of God, and *believe* that His "is the kingdom and the *power*," to be fearless when we enter into the cloud. But we ought. Men march to battle to the sound of music, how much more may we! But in order to do it we must march with Christ. The joy of victory (which belongs to that of temptation), we do know something more about, but it is a dangerous joy; so subtle is Satan that he will suggest, "How clever, how Christlike you must be to have conquered me;" and so may wrest the wreath from us in the very moment of success. The only remedy is to see that it is all of God—arming, fighting, conquering—all of Him, to whom be glory for ever.

* Rev. James Vaughan.

The joy of HEAVEN itself needs Jesus for its centre. It is the pre-eminent joy of all, and ought to be perfect. "In its sunshine there is joy enough laid on earth's dark drops to make a rainbow." But it is to be feared that many, many Christians even, are marring the joy of heaven by mixing earthly colours with the light around the throne. Now there are many things—and pure love is one of them—that God will not willingly allow to die. Is it likely? Having done so much to create it, when we have brought it home, will He blow upon it? But we must be perfectly consecrated if we would be perfectly happy; and our hearts, instead of keeping time with Moore's music, that tells of a garland gathered from an earthly garden (simply omitting the weeds) and calls this heaven, must be moving on to the sublime strains of David, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?"

So then, in all our joys, here and hereafter, we want God to be present. If we have a little thing that is pretty or pleasant, as His little children, we want Him to share it with us; we wish Him to have the *best* part of it; "that He may in all things have the pre-eminence."

"But to say this is like saying *when* you are *happy —take your happiness to Jesus.* Now we want to know something about the times when we are not happy; ay, and about those happy times themselves, is this the highest and best thing you have to say to us: 'Give your happiness to God, enjoy it with God?'" No, there is a higher and a better; and that is, enjoy God Himself, and so when you are happy you will have in Him a joy surpassing all, and when you are unhappy, your unhappiness will not be able to rob you of your joy.

This was the joy David had when he gave counsel

(evidently out of his own experience): "Delight thyself in the Lord."* This was the joy Paul had when he wrote with an overflowing heart (and he set it down as something sweeter than the peace of justification, and the grace that gloried in tribulation), "We joy in God,"†—in God, not in His gifts, not in His grace, not in His works, not in His words, though they be "the very rejoicing of" our "heart:" but in God Himself, in what He is, though we need not omit from our thoughts what He is to us. In His nature, in His character our soul should "exceedingly rejoice." But especially when we contemplate His redeeming, regenerating, electing love, our "spirit" should "rejoice in God our Saviour." If our children rejoice in us, poor parents that we are to them, how much more should "the children of Zion be joyful in their King," who fulfils perfectly every parental as every royal duty! If they delight to have us about them, and when we have been away, hail our coming home with glee, how much more should we wish God with us, and welcome Him with gladness! Delighting God is a duty that we may never have reached unto, but it is a duty none the less; a duty, and the highest of duties. It is more than trusting, it is more than loving, though it implies the existence of both. "These ought" we "to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

So for the future let the language of the heart be—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."‡ Then

* Psalm xxxvii. 4. † Rom. v. 11. ‡ Isa. lxi. 10.

ye shall not have to complain that, standing by the altar of sacrifice, you barely "believe unto the saving of the soul;" or that, entering the sanctuary of service, you try to obey Him and work for Him; but—for our place is within the veil—you will be able to say, "I will rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel." *

And what a God He is to rejoice in! What a God He must be to let us rejoice in Him! But He does more than that, He rejoices over us, He "taketh pleasure" in us, He says He will "joy in them:"† "will rejoice in them as the bridegroom over the bride:"‡ yea, "will joy over them with singing."§ What a scene it is! Were we told of the little children singing around those that were kind to them, it would seem natural enough; but Zephaniah says *God* is the singer, and the singing is about His people? Oh, wonderful scene, wonderful singing, and thrice wonderful God! When our hearts are sad, or our harps are silent, we "will call to remembrance *His* songs in the night;" and *His* joy will restore our own. The only way to "rejoice evermore" is to make God our "exceeding joy." And He is; there is no joy like Him. "His favour is better than the light itself." Rejoicing in Him yours is an unfading joy. Rejoicing in Him your "garments shall be always white." Make God your joy, "and your joy no man taketh from you." "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet" you will "rejoice in the Lord, and will joy in the God of"

* Isa. lxi. 16.
† Isa. lxv. 19.
‡ Isa. lxii. 5.
§ Zeph. iii. 17.

your "salvation"* So sang Habakkuk when he was in sorrow; and it was in times of sorrow, too, that David sang, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage."† How was this? How could he sing thus "in the night seasons?" The reason is very plain. The Lord was the "portion of" his "inheritance;" that was a goodly heritage indeed, and one from which no disaster could disinherit him.

It is time, and more than time, that this chapter came to an end, yet I feel I have not said half enough to inculcate the duty of joy. Duty, I say, for joy is too much regarded as a pleasure; merely as something to have which is very good and sweet, and not to have is painful enough, but about the not having which is no sin and also no harm; on the contrary there is both sin and harm, —sin, for joy is commanded, and "praise is comely,"‡ as comely as flowers in summer, or golden grain in autumn; and harm, because the want of it hurts us, and hurts man and hurts God. God likes to be trusted, likes to be loved, likes to be obeyed, but, if possible, He likes to be rejoiced in more than all, because it is the proof and pledge of all the rest. Will you bring upon God the pain of seeing that you do not value Him enough or confide in Him enough to rejoice in Him, and will you bring upon your own soul a curse "because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness?"§ "Light is sown for the righteous," and if the seed does not bear fruit after its kind—if it bears darkness and not light—then it is a reflection upon the Sower, a reproach upon God. The reason why many think coming to Christ an unhappy

* Hab. iii. 17.
† Psalm xvi. 6.
‡ Psalm xxxiii. 1; cxlvii. 1.
§ Deut. xxviii. 47.

thing is, because they see so many unhappy Christians. *We* tell them that in Jesus is joy, and they half believe it, but they go away and find you joyless, and so they say, "We will not believe it a bit." This mournfulness makes men a stumbling-block to souls. But show me a believer full of joy—as a flower of Paradise might give some idea of Eden—and he helps me to understand what God is, and to trust Him too; what heaven is, and how to get there too. The longer I live, the more am I persuaded of the benediction Christian gladness brings. When we see a face radiant with the reflection of the King's, a life calm with the peace of God, we feel as if we had got upon some sod of greener, softer sward brought down from the Eden above. It is easier to believe in such company; easier to be good in such society. And, as nothing is more contagious than joy, the happiness spreads from heart to heart, and, like Mercy, is "twice blest." So, for the sake of souls and their Saviour,

"Be happy in thy God."

You may be if the joy of Jesus remain in you. You will be if Jesus Himself be there: *for Jesus is your joy.* Instead of speaking of *Christ and our joys*, it would be more true to say that OUR JOY IS CHRIST.

XVII.

Words of Encouragement.

"Father, Thy all-absorbing love
Draws out my heart in love to Thee,
Yet, save Thy love came down to me,
Mine never could have reached above.

Lord, I had nothing ; till within
Thy grace revealed Thy blessed cross,
My very righteousness was dross,
And all my life a trace of sin.

Thou asked for that which Thou hadst made,
My life, myself, my love, my heart;
Yet when Thou wouldst Thy grace impart,
My gift, though poor, was long delayed.

At length, surrendered to Thy call,
I scarcely knew then what I gave;
I cannot now know *all* I have,
But I have Christ, and He is 'all.'"

W. C. Wallis.

IN bringing this little book to a conclusion, I feel like one asked to describe the Alps which are around me as I write. He might remark at the outset that an alp is properly a pasturage, not a mountain at all. Nay, you would say, leave me the mountains with all their mystery and all their vastness, and tell me what they are like. He consents, and then begins to lead you up from the valleys where the brooks are wisped into silver threads,

leaving the chestnuts and the beech, up through the hardy firs, and on where trees give place to flowers, and flowers to lichens, and lichens to rock, and rock to snow and ice. Tell me how high it is; and he tells you the number of feet—16,000 possibly. Tell me more about it, you say—everything about it; and he grows eloquent about the snow line and the glacier formation, about ice crystals and peaks of porphyry and granite, and then he gives the mountain a name, and says it is this Piz, or that Cima, or the other Horn. Well, you say, I do not know that I am much wiser than before; besides, this is but one mountain you have told me of, and there are scores, hundreds—tell me of all. Then he takes you up in fancy to some elevation where the Creator, like a great Shepherd, may be seen leading out His flocks of snow-giants, and he tells you their names. Still, you say, I cannot *see* them or understand them. You cannot, he says; then I can only advise you to come out and climb them for yourself, and so learn their nature and their beauty.

Now that is just what we say to you, reader. We have tried to tell a little of what we know—would that we knew more—about this "land of delight," this land of brooks, and fruit, and flowers, of righteousness whiter than snow, and promises stronger than mountain peaks; but we know full well that the half is not told you. Perhaps it cannot be told, and so we just wish you to come and see for yourself; and when you have trodden its heights we are quite sure that you will call it a delightsome land indeed; for take an illustration (not now from nature, but from numbers): in speaking of full salvation, it is as though one might say to an alge-

braist,—Set down this figure and that, this sign and that, and add them together, and (when he thinks the calculation finished) *multiply all by infinity;* for so must we do ere we be "filled with *all* the fulness of GOD."

So that, besides the difficulty inherent in all experimental subjects, our own involves a difficulty arising from having to deal with the divine—the divine and the universal. It is easy to see that our list of topics might be extended indefinitely. We might speak of Christ and our fears, of Christ and our doubts, and so on.

But though the subject is endless, my powers and my reader's patience are not so, and I must close.

I cannot do so, however, without saying a word to the timid yet true believer, "faint yet pursuing," always slow to receive comfort, and quick to write bitter things against himself. I can fancy—nay, I have often found—at the close of conferences and conventions such bruised reeds, from which, like the wail of the winter's wind came a dirge of despondency:—"We heard there was a blessing; we came together to seek it: we gave up many things, perhaps all things, for it. For a little while we seemed to get what we expected; faith was quickened, hope was brightened, love was inflamed. It was just like living in a city, the streets of which had been suddenly illuminated, but now—

> "'The lights are fled,
> The garland's dead.'

"We find we are as poor as ever: have no wisdom to claim as our own, no strength to spare, no gladness to boast of. We began with having nothing, and we have come to have nothing again. Yes, positively, we started

bankrupts, we continued bankrupts, and bankrupts we seem likely to be to the end of the chapter. We had no purse, or scrip, no shoes, no staff in our hands, and we return as we went forth, absolutely having nothing." The natural consequence of this disenchantment is depression; it is like the disappointment of Moses and Joshua when coming down from Sinai,—of the disciples of Jesus when descending from Tabor. "I thought I was to feel so happy, but, alas! I feel nothing of the sort. Nay, I have hardly any fulness of any kind; I thought I was to be so strong, and I find myself all weak. I thought I was to have such clear views of truth and duty, and instead of that much remains dark; it is very depressing—very. I am disposed to think that there is no such blessing as that held out, or that my endeavours after it have been on the wrong track; or, at all events, that I have been quite mistaken in supposing I had found it." Now such despondency is perfectly natural, as natural as melancholy is in the case of bereavement or of penury, or of the discovery of deep-seated disease. The sight of our sorrows is calculated to produce dejection. To a certain extent such despondency may even be profitable; it may be a spur to press us on: it is "hard" for us "to kick against the pricks;" it is *meant* to be hard, that we may cease to kick, and allow ourselves to be led.

It is a very good thing sometimes that we should be disquieted by a sight of our state. There is one thing worse than being discontented, and that is to be spiritually contented. This Paul never was, for he pressed toward the mark. This we never ought to be, so long as there is anything more to obtain. But when we have got this, I think we have got all that is to be got out of dissatis-

faction, and it is time we turned and looked at the matter from another point of view. To one speaking thus dejectedly, I said, "Are you discontented with Christ?" "No," was the answer,—"not with Christ, but with ——" "Well, with what? With God's appointment (is it not?) that we should have Christ instead of an experience, Christ instead of joy; in a word, should have all our property through Christ's hands, instead of an allowance placed in our own; just as any distrustful or disaffected son would rather have a far smaller portion at his own absolute disposal than the largest possible property accumulated for him, but left and to be left in his trustee's hands?" That is precisely your condition, Christian; "all things are yours," yet nothing is yours; all things, as all are ready for your need,—nothing, as nothing, is at your control. Directly you realise the last, the fact of your poverty, realise the former as clearly, and see if it will not alter all. For having Christ, what have you? "All that Christ has, I suppose,"—put that down. "All that Christ is, I suspect,"—put that down too. "All that Christ does, I assume; all that Christ suffered, I must admit,"—put that down beside; that is to say, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, peace, power, joy, acceptance, sonship—put down all this and a great deal more. Now add up the figures, and see what they make. Is it not a grand total? And all this is yours.

The other night, on my knees, I was bemoaning my state, saying, in effect, I would give anything for so-and-so's experience. I seemed to hear a voice, "Have I been a wilderness to thee? When I sent you without purse or scrip, lacked ye anything?" And I had to

answer, "Nothing!" I had to admit that I had been helped, strengthened, this done, that taught, the other borne; and was I to be discontented because God had chosen to do these things, but not just after the pattern I had planned? "Why," I said to myself, "this is to find fault with God, because he has not given me a coveted type of experience, but——" "Well, but what?" "But has given me Christ." Yes, that was it. I had Christ: my doubting heart could not deny that, and so I rose, saying, "This is wrong: it is ungenerous, ungrateful; I will be so no longer, for having nothing, I possess all things." A poor man living at a roadside inn, who has been in great straits, suddenly begins to pay his way—grandly pays everybody, and yet he is as poor as ever—as poor, I say, as ever. How does it all come about? Why, in the most natural way possible. A rich man passing sees the inn, stops there, gives the landlord money for this, for that, for everything. So, Christian, "thy King cometh unto thee;" and having Him, though poor, thou shalt be rich indeed, and make many rich. You have nothing to save, nothing to show, nothing to boast—no store, not a bit; you have Jesus only, but Jesus is enough. Jesus is all: He is the casket, and all the gems are in it. It is so restful when we are convinced that "to be poor is best;" it really is, else we might squander, boast, think something of ourselves. So, lest we should, "we have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we might trust not in ourselves, but in the living God." 'Tis a Naaman that urges us, and says, "Take two talents," and a Gehazi that takes them; but Gehazi's master knows that he is better without them. God is his Banker—the Lord God of Elijah, who hath fed him for years, and then carried him in a chariot to

glory. After all, should we be better if, instead of rain, we had a reservoir? "It is not the life that Christ gives, but the life that Christ lives"—that is the precious thing.

What is needed then to throw off that despondency and win this encouragement! The invisible link that binds them together is this. *I have Jesus.* And does not this counterbalance all?—is not this alone enough to send one through the streets shouting? So say it to yourself a hundred, nay, if need be, a thousand, times a day. *I have Jesus.* Say it to yourself when tried, when tempted. *I have Jesus.* I have nothing of my own, but *I have Jesus.* I have no goodness, no wisdom, no might: but *I have Jesus.* Say, I have a bad temper, if you must; a mischievous tongue, if you must; a doubting heart, if you must; a worldly spirit, if you must; but—*I have Jesus.* I have enough sin in me to curse any man, I have enough corruption in me to crush any man, but, blessed be God, *I have Jesus.*

Repeat it over and over, I say, as the case may require, and see if it does not touch a secret spring, open a secret drawer, and display before you such an inexhaustible treasury, that you dare not complain of poverty again. Repeat it over and over, and ask—"Why, what else, what more, what better would I or could I have? Suppose I had a hundred virtues, suppose I had a thousand gifts—would that be equal to *one* Jesus?" "No," you say, "of course not; but——" "But what?" "Still the one would be in me, the other is out of me." That is to forget that Christ is "in you"—the living Christ.

You may call this "having nothing;" *I* call it "possessing all things." Contented with myself I am not,

and do not expect to be, but as soon as I clasp Christ in my arms, all content with *Him*, I can exclaim, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." I *am* nothing, I *have* nothing (in myself), and yet have I

"More than heart can seek, in God's all-perfect Lamb."

And now, after we have made up our minds that we have the blessing, there may be many times when we are still downcast. I met the other day one of the leaders of the movement for the promotion of spiritual life, one who has flourished like a palm-tree, and grown like a cedar of Lebanon, whose testimony once thrilled us beyond expression, but he said, "Now I am a little disappointed; I have not that perfect rest that Wesley's hymns sing of."

The day after I met another, a young believer, and one who had thrown himself, with all the exuberance of youth, into this movement,—often had I met him as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber exulting in the open-face visions of the glory of the Lord,—but now he said all was so clouded that there were times when he could only hold on by such texts as, "Whosoever cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He had not lost his allegiance, nor his consistency of character, nor his love to Christ, but he had lost most of the brightness, and even his assurance had been shaken; while a dear relative, for whom he had been concerned, that he too should have fulness of blessing, having glided into it without any suddenness of experience, missing the transports, had also escaped the despondency, and now seemed to hold on his way, and wax stronger and stronger.

Why do I mention these cases? To depreciate the times of refreshing which some have enjoyed? God forbid. To make light of the beatific vision to some vouchsafed? Assuredly not. To raise forebodings of sorrow in those whose present experience is all joy? Far, far from it. Nay, I mention them that I may urge on those who have been indulged with such sweet revealings of the love of God, not to count upon them. Build "up yourselves on your most holy faith"—not on your most happy feeling.

But I have another and a stronger reason for telling things else painful to tell, viz., the encouragement of the weak-hearted. I want those who have not had anything approaching to visions or revelations of the Lord to be satisfied with their unecstatic experience, and I think nothing more likely to reconcile them to it than the sight of the "thorn in the flesh" which is apt to pierce those who have.

I name such things also with a strong conviction that they ought to be named, in order that those who have lived in the sun, but for whom that sun is now under an eclipse, may not be "cast down by over much sorrow." You are tempted to think, my dejected brother, that the blessing you had was not *the* blessing, or that you have sinned it away. Now here are instances in which, if in any, the blessing was genuine, and in which there has been apparently no wilful sin, and yet "the clouds return after the rain." You see, then, that your case is not exceptional, nor your dejection any positive proof that God is displeased with you. He may be, but this alone does not prove that He is.

The biographies of some of the saintliest men and

women furnish parallels: *e.g.*, Madame Guyon's four years of depression will occur to all. But it is of more consequence to note that very similar experience occurred in New Testament histories; in that of St. Paul, for instance,, who speaks of himself as "troubled," "perplexed," "cast down,"* who says that at one time his flesh had "no rest," but he was "troubled" on every side, without were fightings, within were fears; at another place, too, he "had no rest in" his "spirit." And even the Lord Jesus was "straitened" till His life-work, death-word was accomplished; so that straitening is no proof of sin. "Ah, but," you say, "with me there is sin as well as straitening." No doubt: but while that should humble you before your God, it should not lead you to deny what His grace has done for you, much less to doubt what it can do. I stood on the sand of the sea and watched the waves. They came ebbing and flowing: for every wave that came in there was another that went out, and for some moments I could not say whether the tide were coming in or going out; but as I waited, and as I watched, I saw that the advancing wave was longer, and the retreating wave shorter, and I said, The tide is coming in; and so I say of you, if, like Paul, though troubled, you are not distressed; though perplexed, you are not in despair; though cast down, you are not destroyed. Even the presence of sin itself, sad as it is, wrong as it is, must not blind you to the presence of God, and of the power of grace. Be not discouraged at the refluent wave if the tide is coming in after all; still hold out, still hold on, and hope on too, and the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

* 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9; vii. 5.

Whatever drawbacks, then, there be in our life, whatever deductions must be made from the experience we would wish to see, let us be thankful if there be progress *on the whole;* if, however things may look at particular periods, we can yet see that the tide of grace is advancing, and all the coldness receding.

"But I have no such proofs, no such progress to chronicle." Well, this is indeed sad, this is indeed sinful, yet there is life, life more abundantly even for thee. It is the empty vessel that the Master loves to fill, the poor in spirit that He loves to bless. Yes, not the spiritually rich, but the spiritually poor; not those who say they are increased in goods, and have need of nothing, but those who feel they have need of everything, but feel also that Christ can supply that need, they shall receive the blessing of the Lord, for—and how can the disciple close better than as the Master began?—"Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying,—

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT: FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN: FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK: FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS: FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL: FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART: FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

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